

Feds Supporting Local Aquaculture Companies

Support will help industry keep growing

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“The support from the federal government is really important as it will boost employment numbers in the Coast of Bays and it will help the aquaculture industry grow well into the future.”

The above comment was made by Boyd Pack, the president of Newfoundland Aqua Services, in reference to the \$4 million federal government support to the province’s aquaculture industry that was officially announced on March 20.

The announcement was made by Senator Elizabeth Marshall on behalf of the Honourable Keith Ashfield, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and Minister for the Atlantic Gateway and the Honourable Bernard Valcourt, Minister of State for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) in a press conference held in St. John’s.

The support is being funded through Fisheries and Oceans Aquaculture Innovation and Market Access Program for a total value of \$708,500 and \$3.3 million in funding is being provided through the ACOA Business Development Program. The ACOA program provides access to capital in the form of interest-free, repayable contributions.

Three companies in the Coast of Bays were a part of the support announcement made in March.

Northern Harvest Sea Farms

Northern Harvest Sea Farms received support to the tune of \$2.3 million. Most of this money, \$1.3 million, is in the form of a repayable assistance from ACOA and is being used to expand the company’s Atlantic salmon farming operation around Rencontre East and in the Bay d’Espoir area.

Some of the funding, \$500,000, will be used to help complete the development of an innovative biosecure recirculation hatchery for the production of high quality smolt in Stephenville.

Jennifer Caines is Northern Harvest Sea Farms’ project manager in Newfoundland.

Caines said, “Our hatchery is very important to our operation as it’s the much needed link in our expansion in the province as it will provide us with a secure supply of smolt for our production here in the Coast of Bays region.

“The hatchery certainly adds to our growth and development as it’s an important piece of our puzzle moving forward. We will have biological control over our own smolt raised here in the province, which adds to the security of our operations so that we’re here for the long-term.

“This funding will not only secure the jobs in production in the COB, but it will also bring something new to the West Coast region as it will add to the employment levels in Stephenville

as we will need people to operate the hatchery. Jobs will be available in supplying feed for the fish there and in the transportation services based around the facility.”

Caines said that NHSF has already established some grow out sites in the Rencontre area and will start growing trout in the Bay d’Espoir region as well thanks to the support by the federal government.

Newfoundland Aqua Services Ltd.

Newfoundland Aqua Services revived \$483,000 in repayable assistance from ACOA to acquire technology components required for land-based, net washing pilot project designed to improve biosecurity and environmental protection measures in the local industry. The company also received \$112,500 to purchase and install innovative equipment to improve efficiency and environmental performance in the cleaning of nets to prevent marine growth at aquaculture sites.

Boyd Pack, the president of Newfoundland Aqua said that the money will be used to purchase equipment to take water out of the solids that come off nets during the cleaning process.

Pack said, “We also need equipment to clean up the water accumulated during a net cleaning so that we can either re-use it or to have the water meet environmental standards so that we can discharge it into the local environment.

“We will also be using a vacuum type technology to help us in our net cleaning process.”

Pack said that the federal money is important to the entire aquaculture industry in the COB.

“This money will add to the employment levels in the COB in the aquaculture industry overall, it will improve the biosecurity levels needed for the industry and it will help improve our impact on the environment.

“Based on current industry standards, Newfoundland Aqua Services should be able to grow its employee base over the next several years as we’re expecting an increase in the number of nets we will have to clean once our land-based washing net system is in place and in good working order.”

Gray Aquaculture

Gray Aquaculture is expanding its salmon farming operation in the Bay d’Espoir area with a repayable investment of \$500,000 from ACOA.

Clyde Collier, the head of the Gray Aqua Group in Newfoundland, said that the money will be used to set up the company’s fourth grow-out site at Goblin Bay in the Bay d’Espoir area.