

## **Fisheries and Aquaculture**

August 28, 2014

### **Investing in Technology to Advance the Aquaculture Industry**

#### **Mussel Farming Software Supported with Investment of More Than \$30,000**

Two provincial mussel farming operations will develop and implement new software to enhance operations with help from the Provincial Government. The Honourable Keith Hutchings, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, announced \$30,180 through the Fisheries Technology and New Opportunities Program today to help Sunrise Fish Farms Inc. in Green Bay and its sister company Connaigre Fish Farms Inc. in the Coast of Bays pursue the project.

**“The Provincial Government was pleased to provide more than \$30,000 towards this project, which has the potential to show all provincial mussel farmers how software can improve traceability and inventory tracking aspects of their operations. Helping provincial businesses gain competitive advantage is a priority for this government, especially in the aquaculture sector, which has created tremendous economic growth in rural areas.”**

*- The Honourable Keith Hutchings, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture*

Geographical Information System (GIS) software will be adapted for storing, analyzing, and displaying geographically referenced information about mussels in development (i.e. data identified according to location). This is the first time this software has ever been used by provincial mussel growers. Using GIS software will allow the companies to provide valuable production information to processors and other clients who need accurate estimates of when product will be market ready and in what volumes. The software will also promote traceability, as it will provide the consumer with the opportunity to know exactly where their mussels came from. This helps the companies maintain important organic certifications.

**“As the operator of a significant and growing mussel farming operation, I appreciate the Provincial Government support for my efforts to make my operations and my connections with other businesses as efficient as possible. It is necessary to pursue improved technology in order to continue advancing our farms. I thank the Provincial Government for the funding it is providing, and look forward to implementing software that other operators might pursue in the future.”**

*- Job Halfyard, Owner and Operator of Sunrise Fish Farms Inc. and Connaigre Fish Farms Inc.*

This management software will prove particularly beneficial for both companies given the large scale of their operations. At present, the companies manage production in more than 380 hectares of water currently licensed in Green Bay, and more than 450 hectares of water licensed in the Coast of Bays. In addition, the Sunrise Fish Farms Inc. operation is currently one of the best mussel seed collection sites in the province - it supplies seed for both its own operations, and provides seed to other provincial growers. Combined, the two companies are able to produce between 5 million and 8 million pounds of mussels annually.

## QUICK FACTS

- Minister Keith Hutchings announced \$30,180 today to support the development and use of information management software for the mussel farming industry.
- In addition to achieving record production levels in 2012, in 2013 the provincial mussel industry became the first in North America to be certified to the Canadian Organic Aquaculture Standard, which assures consumers that their seafood is organic and farmed in an environmentally-sound manner.
- Budget 2014: Shared Prosperity, Fair Society, Balanced Outlook includes \$4 million for the Fisheries Technology and New Opportunities Program to support projects aimed at enhancing the harvesting, processing, and marketing of provincial seafood over the next two years.

- 30 -

### Media contacts:

Jason Card

Director of Communications

Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture

709-729-3733, 699-0470

[jasoncard@gov.nl.ca](mailto:jasoncard@gov.nl.ca)

Dr. Laura Halfyard

General Manager

Sunrise Fish Farms Inc. and Connaigre Fish Farms Inc.

[lhalfyard@bellaliant.net](mailto:lhalfyard@bellaliant.net)