



# PRAWN TALES

A Newsletter of the U.S. Freshwater Prawn and Shrimp Growers Association



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## NC Producers Form The "American Prawn Cooperative"

When asked why a group of NC producers needed to form a cooperative, Don Ipock, President of the American Prawn Cooperative (APC) said, "It's all about strength in numbers". And so it seems. Since the middle of 2006, a group of far-sighted producers began meeting with experts from NC Cooperative Extension, USDA, and the NC Department of Agriculture who provided insight and assistance with the creation of this new business venture.



Ms. Natalie Relyea, APC Processing Manager, described how the group has already benefited from the new found alliances. "In the past, every producer had the burden of harvesting and selling prawn on their own. This year, we all worked the harvest at each others farms...the process was cut in half". She went on to say, "we are now selling in the same markets together, not against each other and we are benefitting from opportunities that we could only have dreamed of before".

Just this year, the APC has had a number of noteworthy accomplishments. Foremost would be receipt of a \$300,000 grant from the North Carolina Rural Center to fund the development of a processing and storage facility. The facility will be located near the Walstonburg farm of "Relyea's Crazy Claws" Prawn. This project will allow cooperative members a central site to process their product in a HACCP regulated environment under their own con-

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**Ohio Prawn Feast**

Photo by: Laura Tiu, Ohio State University

Please send any questions or comments to: Editor, USFPSGA Newsletter. c/o Mike Frinsko, Aquaculture Area Agent, Jones County Extension Center, P.O. Box 218, Trenton, NC 28585. Ph. 252.448.9621, e-mail to: [mike\\_frinsko@ncsu.edu](mailto:mike_frinsko@ncsu.edu)

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*Dolores: Thanks for all your help!!*

*Ed.*



## President's Message

Dear members:

We are excited that the 2008 Annual Meeting will be held in The Great State of North Carolina –my home. The program will be a mixture of the results of scientific research, producer experi-

ences, and an emphasis on marketing techniques. One of our many marketing efforts includes the NC Sea Grant program, which will give our Association its own label. We have, also, applied to Seafood Watch for the coveted "Best Choice" designation for the freshwater prawn. The visibility of our unique product continues to increase.

The Board of Directors of the U.S. Freshwater Prawn and Shrimp Growers

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## 2008 National Prawn Association Meeting: Time to Make Plans

The Eighth Annual Meeting of the U.S. Freshwater Prawn & Shrimp Growers Association, Inc. is called to meet December 5-6, 2008 in Raleigh, NC. The meeting will take place at the Hilton North Raleigh at Raleigh, NC. Make reservations by phoning 1-919-872-2323 or 1-800-HILTON with using our code UFW for our group.

A registration fee of \$75.00 will be charged to each 2008 member attending the Annual Meeting if registration is received by **November 14, 2008**, along with 2009 dues. Spouses are invited to attend and a registration fee of \$40.00 will be charged. After the November 14 deadline, registrants pay an additional \$20.00 meeting fee.



Steve Fratesi with "Jake Blues" at 2007 Nashville meeting

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Hilton North Raleigh at the rate of \$99.00 per night plus tax for **December 4, 5 and 6, 2008**. You are urged to make your reservations right away. Room rates will increase after **November 11, 2008**, the hotel will be booked for the holiday season and we have no extensions for our price, so hurry and make reservations.

The **Agenda** for the meeting is being completed: Workshops will include, New Growers, Effect on Grading and Fertilization, Genetic Research, Marketing Techniques, Consumer Acceptance information, Chef Demo, and History of Prawn Culture, Low temperature warehousing for holiday season, Business Meeting and many more. Please visit, [www.freshwaterprawn.org](http://www.freshwaterprawn.org) for a complete agenda. If you do not have internet please phone for an Agenda to be mailed to you. Please assist us in alerting individuals interested in prawn production of the Annual Meeting by forwarding this information to them and to local media.

Should you have any question please call me at 919-734-6140 or Dolores Fratesi at 662-390-3528 or email the association [usprawngrowers@yahoo.com](mailto:usprawngrowers@yahoo.com). The email account will be closely monitored, so feel free to let me know if someone has been left out or of possible new members.

*Gene Wiseman*

Gene Wiseman, USFPSGA President

P.S. We welcome volunteers to help with the 2008 Annual Meeting. Please let us know if you would like to work with us. We would greatly appreciate your help!

### 2008 Board of Directors Elected at Annual Meeting

Winding up another excellent annual conference, a new Board of Directors was installed and elected it's leadership for 2008 as follows:

#### Officers:

Ron Pigue, Vice President; Gene Wiseman, President; Jane Corbin, Sec.-Treas; Bob Boyd, Ex-Officio

#### Directors:

Craig Upstrom, TX, J.C. and Brenda Lyons, IL, Jack Huerkamp, MS, Steve Fratesi, MS, Jerry Pellman, IN, John and Natalie Relyea, NC



Officers (L-R) R. Pigue, G. Wiseman, J. Corbin, B. Boyd

## Freshwater Prawn Make A Splash at 2008 Monterey Bay Extravaganza

by: Dolores Fratesi

"Cooking for Solutions", perhaps the most influential celebration of organic and sustainable gourmet cuisine in the United States, was held at the Monterey Bay Aquarium in Monterey, Calif. on May 16-17, 2008. U. S. Farm-Raised Freshwater Prawns were featured and received as an exciting new product.

Dolores and Anne-Lauren Fratesi were excited to represent the freshwater prawn industry at the event. Lauren Farms donated jumbo freshwater prawns for celebrity chefs to prepare and showcase.

"Cooking for Solutions" began on Thursday. Panels of distinguished guests and experts from across the U. S. discussed various topics: "Shrimp, Salmon, Tuna: How to deal with the demand for the Big Three", climate change and the implications for food systems, farming and supporting sustainable farming and seafood, and numerous others.



**Chef Dory Ford cooking at Monterey Bay Amphitheatre**

*(Continued from Pres. message, page 1)*

Association, Inc. has recommended that our name be changed to "The U.S. Freshwater Prawn Growers Association, Inc. This change to the By-laws will be voted on at the December Business Meeting. We have no marine shrimp growers in the USFPSGA and establishing a unique identity will align our Association with the marketing and business plan approved this past year.

Freshwater prawns belong to a completely different family of crustaceans

from the marine shrimp. Because of this difference, prawns have a completely different taste, nutrient composition, and texture. The freshwater prawn industry has worked hard in its marketing efforts to preserve the individuality of the freshwater prawn and we are at the threshold of carrying our industry well past the niche market. Information on the name change will be sent with the Call to Convention. Please consider the recommendation and attend the business meeting for this important vote and other Association business.

Make your plans now to attend the Annual Meeting on December 5-6, 2008 in Raleigh. North Carolina is rolling out the red carpet to make this the most memorable convention yet!

*Gene*

**Gene Wiseman**

President,  
USFPSGA

That evening, a "Meet the Chefs" reception was held, which was limited to 300 guests. Gourmet dishes were prepared with freshwater prawns and a variety of other sustainable and organic products. The reception provided an opportunity to network with suppliers, chefs, vendors and the media. Dolores and Anne-Lauren answered questions and promoted the many superior qualities of the freshwater prawn while the participants sampled an original prawn recipe created by Chef Dory Ford of Bon Appétit.

Chef Dory's "Sautéed Freshwater Prawn with Warm Avocado Blini and Charred Grapefruit Compote" was prepared by guest chefs from Google as the guests watched.

Dolores commented, "The recipe was a delightful mingling of flavors. The small avocado cakes were topped with a sweet-sour compote and butter-sautéed prawns. It was just incredible – the chefs could hardly keep up with the demand for samples." The table was surrounded during the entire evening by tasters and those interested in acquiring information on the freshwater prawn.

Friday evening's Gala was an extravaganza of sustainable and organic food, seafood and wine that was attended by thousands of 'foodies.' Restaurants, wineries and celebrity chefs were on hand to discuss featured dishes at designated food stations throughout the aquarium. The chef at Pebble Beach created a Prawn and Grits recipe that was served by celebrity chef Michel Nischan of The Dressing Room in Fairfield, Conn.

Anne-Lauren Fratesi commented, "Freshwater prawns are the only sustainable 'shrimp'. This fact creates a flurry of interest in the prawn. Promoting prawns at events that have world-wide exposure like "Cooking for Solutions" is a vital part of educating the consumer and expanding the market for prawns."

Sustainable seafood comes from sources, either fished or farmed, that can exist over the long-term without compromising species' survival or the health of the surrounding ecosystem. For more information visit [www.mbayaq.org](http://www.mbayaq.org) or [www.seafoodwatch.org](http://www.seafoodwatch.org).

## Monterey Bay Seafood Watch Defined



The following article is excerpted from the Monterey Bay Aquarium website. The success of this unique program underscores the importance sustainable production practices have in the eyes of the marketplace.

### What is Seafood Watch?

A program of Monterey Bay Aquarium designed to raise consumer awareness about the importance of buying seafood from sustainable sources. We recommend which seafood to buy or avoid, helping consumers to become advocates for environmentally friendly seafood. We're also partners of the [Seafood Choices Alliance](#) where, along with other seafood awareness campaigns, we provide seafood purveyors with recommendations on seafood choices.

### What is our mission

Seafood Watch's mission is to empower consumers and businesses to make choices for healthy oceans.

### How did Seafood Watch begin?

Monterey Bay Aquarium developed a list of sustainable seafood as part of our 1997-1999 "Fishing for Solutions" exhibit anticipating visitor questions about making better seafood choices. Our Portola Cafe restaurant and husbandry department also adopted a "sustainable seafood" policy. The list evolved into the Seafood Watch pocket guide for consumers. Today, we have a dedicated staff to create and distribute regional Seafood Watch pocket guides across the United States and Canada.

### Why do seafood choices matter?

The choices we make as consumers drive the seafood market place. Your purchasing power can make a difference by supporting those fisheries and fish farms that are

*(Continued on page 5)*

*(Prawn Cooperative: Continued from page 1)*

trol and at their convenience. To date the cooperative has about 5 members. When questioned about future growth, President Don Ipock suggested "a number of new potential growers have been watching us very closely. We know that at least one new producer will begin digging ponds this fall with the intent to join us". "We also have about 4 additional farmers that have been talking to us for over a year". "After they see how successful we are with this year's sales, they'll make the decision to join or not".

Another reason for optimism can be found in the cooperative's efforts at self-sufficiency. Through DJ&W Prawn Farm, the APC has successfully supplied both members and non-members graded juveniles for stocking production ponds. Producers have mentioned how they like the security of a locally produced juvenile. Nursery owners Johnny and Doug Barbee encourage an open atmosphere where buyers can visit the facility and see just how the counts are done. The result is confidence that ponds are stocked accurately and at the appropriate grade.

In 2008, APC members worked with Mike Frinsko of NC Cooperative Ex-



**APC members and employees prepare prawn for IQF processing**

tension in developing a proprietary feed/fertilizer. Based on research conducted by Dr. Lou D'Abramo of Mississippi State, use of the innovative feed resulted in a cost reduction of over 30% compared to the more common sinking fish feeds used before.

Processing and marketing efforts were conducted jointly among members this year. This resulted in more product forms reaching the market, including: live, IQF whole and shell-on tail, and

block frozen whole and shell-on tail. With all that's going on, it's no wonder that the members continue to wear so many hats. As producer Gene Wiseman says, "We love the new opportunities the co-op gives us". He adds, "In time, I think we'll even surprise ourselves" with the successes of the APC. One thing for sure, this new business has an excellent start with some of the most innovative and creative producers in the industry. We wish them well!

# Ohio State University's role in the Development of the State's Freshwater Prawn Industry

By: Laura Tiu, OSU Aquaculture Specialist

During the past 8 years, I've been fortunate to be part of a great team of researchers and extension specialists involved in supporting the development of a viable freshwater prawn industry in Ohio. Our steady industry growth can be directly attributed to the research and extension efforts which have addressed the needs of producers throughout our state.

These efforts have included: research to determine the feasibility of freshwater shrimp culture in Ohio, workshops to transfer production technology to producers, providing assistance to industry in securing grants, developing business and marketing plans and even the harvesting and processing product. The industry in Ohio is small, but growing! (Table 1).

This year, the Ohio prawn industry has assumed or privatized many of the roles previously undertaken by the OSU aquaculture team. There is now a freshwater shrimp nursery in Ohio, one group of farmers is distributing feed and one producer even held his own training workshops. Sure, we still supply Extension support to the industry, fielding questions and sharing information, but with the industry stepping up to the plate, our role has diminished. It has never been the goal of the University to continually hold the hand of Industry, it's a success when we can let go.

So, are we out of the freshwater prawn business? I certainly hope not. If the industry identifies a problem that they need researched, it's our job to secure funding, design a study to remedy the problem, and share the results. At The Ohio State University, we are proud to be part of this profitable and growing new sector of aquaculture. We look forward to continue our support of the freshwater prawn industry, as needed, in facing any future challenges.

**Table 1. Estimated size of the Freshwater Shrimp industry in Ohio from 2001-2008**

YEAR	# GROWERS	# ACRES
2001	3	2.5
2002	8	4.0
2003	16	8.0
2004	20	8.5
2005	21	10.0
2006	22	11.0
2007	23	12.00
2008	25	13.00



**Training in post-harvest methods, Piketon Field Station**

*(Continued from page 4)*

better for the environment, while at the same time relieving pressure on others that are not doing as well.

Some of the key problems that help us evaluate whether a fishery is sustainable include the level of by catch observed, the fishing methods and their impact, if it is farmed—how it is farmed, and how well the fishery or aquaculture operation is managed. With nearly 75% of the world's fisheries either fully fished or overfished these issues are more important than ever. By using the Seafood Watch pocket guide you are making choices based on the best available information and supporting environmentally friendly fisheries and aquaculture operations.

## What is "sustainable seafood?"

We believe that seafood from sources, either fished or farmed, that can exist over the long-term without compromising species' survival or the health of the surrounding ecosystem is sustainable. We favor conservation of the resource in the face of scientific uncertainty.

For additional information, please visit the following link to learn more about this exciting program at the Monterey Bay Aquarium : [http://www.mbayaq.org/cr/cr\\_seafoodwatch](http://www.mbayaq.org/cr/cr_seafoodwatch)

## USFPSGA 2008 MEMBER APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Association Dues (circle one):**

Producer: \$50.00

Allied Tradesman: \$100.00

Education/Research: \$10.00

Federal/State Agencies: \$10.00

Friends of USFPSGA: \$25.00

Do you want your name listed in the USFPSGA Internet Directory? YES / NO

Acres raised \_\_\_\_\_ Hatchery \_\_\_\_ Nursery \_\_\_\_

*Tear off this portion, along with fee payment, and send to:*

**USFPSGA**

**655 Napanee Road Leland, MS 38756**

Would you be available to serve on a  
Committee for the Association? YES / NO

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!**

United States Freshwater Prawn &  
Shrimp Growers Association, Inc.  
NEWSLETTER  
655 Napanee Road  
Leland, Mississippi 38756

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