

PRAWN TALES

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



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US Prawn Grower Makes Introduction at “Monterey Bay” Event

National Event Showcases Freshwater Prawn

By Delores Fratesi

The United States Freshwater Prawn Association was recently featured at the 6th Annual “Cooking for Solutions” event hosted by the Monterey Bay Aquarium in Monterey, Calif. The national event brought over 2,000 participants committed to sustainable aquaculture and agriculture to this world-renowned aquarium.

Delores and Anne-Lauren Fratesi represented the U.S. Freshwater Prawn Association at the event. The 3-day experience was attended by media and celebrity chefs from across the United States. Information on U.S. Farm-Raised Freshwater Prawns was provided to the chefs, media, and the public. Prawns are anticipated to soon



Delores Fratesi with Chef Teplitzky

receive the coveted “Best Choice” designation from the internationally known *Seafood Watch* program.

(Continued on page 4)



Processing Prawn, Kentucky

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

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President’s Message

Dear members:

It has been a hot, dry summer here in southern Illinois and I hope everyone’s ponds are doing well. In thinking about my message to you, one thought clearly stands out; “Our industry is entering a time of huge expansion possibilities”.

As an example, Delores Fratesi has worked very hard on the Monterey Bay project with outstanding results (see article, above). From experiences like Monterey Bay and numerous other domestic and import market indicators, I think that

demand for our product will increase tremendously in the near future.

This brings me to the main point of my letter. The longer I am involved in the aquaculture industry the more I realize how reluctant producers are to share information with each other- for fear of losing market share. I believe this type of thinking is counterproductive. In my opinion, the only way we will achieve our goal of making freshwater prawns known and used nationally is for us to expand

(Continued on page 2)

Management of Freshwater Prawn Production Ponds to Minimize the Incidence of High pH

Louis R. D'Abramo
Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Mississippi State University

While the 2008 spring stocking seems a distant activity, producers find that early preparation and pre-treatment of pond soils and water quality can pay labor and cost saving dividends realized in improved final production. By strictly adhering to the sequence of best management practices described in this article, from the construction of a production pond through stocking, and including some post-stocking recommendations, a high probability of success is assured. The foundation of that success is the prevention of both the growth of problematic rooted aquatic weeds and the occurrence of lethally high pH levels. If some of the following Best Management Practices (BMPs) are not part of your current production strategy, you are encouraged to incorporate them as necessary to improve your eventual "bottom line".

Pond Construction

- The inside slope of the pond bank should be approximately 2:1 and depth must average about 4 feet to control the growth of unwanted bottom vegetation. The shallow end of the pond should not be less than 3 ft. in depth. Lime the pond bottom if soil is acidic

No Later Than 3.5 To 4 Weeks Before Stocking

- Add water to ponds; determine hardness and alkalinity of water; both alkalinity and hardness should be greater than 50 mg/l (ppm) and not very disproportionate; increase hardness by adding agricultural gypsum (calcium sulfate) at 2.72 lb per acre foot (assuming 100% purity) for every increase of 1 ppm in hardness that is desired. The recommended gypsum product should be a pulverized fine grain "Land Plaster" to achieve thorough dissolving in the water.

- Fertilize pond with an inorganic fertilizer either 33-44 lb/acre of urea or 44-59 lb/acre of ammonium nitrate to deliver 15-20 lb of nitrogen/acre. Follow with ½ of this initial rate of application twice per week until stocking.
- Add organic fertilizer such as rice bran, cottonseed meal, soybean meal, or a poultry litter pelleted product initially at 150 lb per surface acre; select a fertilizer based upon lowest cost; wait about 4 days, then continue adding organic fertilizer at 15 lb/A every other day until stocking or until the water clarity is reduced to 24 inches as determined by use of a Secchi disc.

2 Weeks Before Stocking

- Check pH on sunny days between 2:00 – 3:00 pm to determine whether pH exceeds 9.0
- If pH exceeds 9.0, then add blue dye product according to specifications or keep sediment suspended along bottom of the pond to reduce light penetration. Then check to ensure that pH remains below 9.0

At Stocking

- Do not stock ponds if pH is greater than 9.0! Wait until pH has stabilized in the pond.

After Stocking

- If pond is observed to have dense phytoplankton growth (<10 inches), check pH every day, if possible, between 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm; add blue dye product if pH exceeds 9.0
- At recommended stocking rates of 8000 to 12,000 juveniles per acre, daily application rates* of organic fer-

(Continued on page 3)

(President's Message, Continued from page 1)

and grow. This will require expansion of existing farms and by bringing new producers into the industry. Therefore, I urge all producers to spread the word and be supportive of each other as much as is possible.

I also understand there are issues confronting our industry that need to be addressed, such as quality control. This is nothing new as there are issues to be resolved in any new industry.

The point is that we are all dependent on each other for our industry to succeed, and the sooner we accept this, the better off we'll all be.

I'm excited for this industry and look forward to assisting in its growth as we, together, provide our unique and healthful food to an ever-expanding market.

Our annual convention is coming up in December. Delores is chairing the conference so I am confident that it will be both entertaining as well as infor-

mative. Please plan to attend and bring anyone that is interested in getting involved in the prawn industry.

Fall is upon us and I wish all a successful and prosperous harvest. See you at the conference.

THANKS,

Robert L. Boyd
President
USFPSCA

2007 National Prawn Association Meeting: Time to Make Plans

I hope this message finds you all in high spirits, keeping cool somewhere from the long and tedious hot summer weather we've all endured this year! But, here we are, planning for our 2007 meeting.

This year we will meet December 7-8, 2007 at the Radisson Hotel Opryland in Nashville, TN. Our program will feature current university research, workshops on pond construction, stocking, grow-out, harvest, marketing, and more. Details of

the meeting will be posted soon on our website at: www.freshwaterprawn.org.

Please note that a block of rooms has been reserved for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, Dec. 6-8, 2007. You can make reservations by calling the Radisson Reservations toll free number (800) 333-3333 or the hotel directly at (615) 231-8888.

It's important to use the group name (US Freshwater Prawn & Shrimp Growers Association)

when booking to ensure you receive the group rate. You may view the Radisson Hotel facility at <http://www.radisson.com/nashvilletn>.

For further information e-mail us at : usprawngrowers@yahoo.com or phone Dolores Fratesi at Lauren Farms, Inc. 655 Napanee Road Leland, MS 38756, at Ph. (662) 390-3528. and www.laurenfarms.com

2007 Board of Directors Elected at Annual Meeting

The results of this years USFPSGA election are as follows:

Officers:

Rober Boyd, IL (President)
Gene Wiseman, NC (President Elect)

Directors:

Shawn Coyle, KY
Jane Corbin, TN
Craig Upstrom, TX
Ron Pigue, AR
Pete Reems,

J.C. Lyons, IL
Jack Huerkamp, MS
Hoyt Hayes, TN
Steve Fratesi, MS
Dolores Fratesi, MS

Our records indicate we have 36 active members at this time with over 250 former members and friends on our mailing list.

Don't miss out on all the fellowship and interaction in this great industry. Stay on the cutting edge and keep up your membership ! Be sure to send in your dues as soon as this newsletter reaches your doorstep.

In 2007, let's all bring in a new member and have greater industry association than ever before!

Be sure to register early for the upcoming annual meeting in Nashville.

Thank You to 2006 USFPSGA Sponsors

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(D'Abramo, Managing pH, Continued from page 2)

tilizer such as corn gluten pellets, poultry litter pellets or range pellets will help to maintain pH below 9.0.

Note: Daily fertilization rates are calculated based upon a ratio of 2.5 to 3.0 for the total amount of fertilizer (lb/acre) used for the growing season to anticipated production (lb/acre) at harvest. Total amounts of fertilizer to be used for a growing season need to be adjusted by multiplying by acreage of the pond. The total amount of fertilizer (lb/A) added to ponds during the growing season is proportionately divided into groups of weeks and is listed below for an 18 week growing season.

Weeks	Proportional Amount
1-5	15%
6-10	30%
11-15	30%
16-18	25%

The amount of fertilizer to add per day for each specific period of weeks is calculated by dividing the total amount of fertilizer calculated for that period by the number of days in that period of weeks.

(Monterey Bay: Continued from page 1)



Ann-Lauren Fratesi with Chef Teplitzky

Not only was the freshwater prawn prepared for the “Cooking for Solutions” tasting gala, it was also selected for use at one of the six weekend cooking demonstrations. Celebrity chef, Terry Teplitzky of Marina, Calif. stated, “I thoroughly enjoyed working with the prawns. It is great to know that there will be a sustainable prawn product available that will suit the many needs of a chef. We are glad to have an understanding of what the freshwater prawn farming industry is about.”

The Aquarium promotes sustainable seafood through the Seafood Watch program to consumers across the United States, as well as worldwide. Over 22 million consumers have received information about the importance of buying environmentally-friendly seafood through this program. USFPGA Director, Dolores Fratesi knows how important this international exposure could potentially be to the United States Freshwater Prawn industry.

Fratesi states, “Seafood Watch is committed to raising consumer awareness about the environmental impact and safety issues of our seafood choices. Having freshwater prawns recognized as a premium product on a national level emphasizes the prawn industry’s commitment to quality—this could definitely be a turning point for our industry.”

Panelists at the meeting included Fedele Bauccio, CEO, Bon Appetit Management Company; Peter Redmond, VP Divisional Merchandise Manager Seafood, Wal-Mart; Joe Rogoff, Regional VP, Whole Foods Market; Bob Scowcroft, Rebecca Goldberg, Senior Scientist, Environmental Defense; Anne Kapuscinski, Professor, University of Minnesota, Sustainable Seafood; and numerous other professionals from across the United States dedicated to the preservation of aquaculture, the support of U.S. farmers, and the marketing of sustainable products.

Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture, Lester Spell, is proud to have freshwater prawns recognized in such a manner. Spell states, “Aquaculture impacts U.S. farmers three-fold in that it provides consumers with healthy products, a healthy environment, and a healthy economy. Our farmers provide sustainable products which will feed consumers today and for generations to come while protecting our natural resources. Buying from sources that you know and trust will help to insure a superior food supply.”

The media and chefs were each furnished binders filled with information on both sustainable aquaculture and the many participants at the “Cooking for Solutions” event. Each binder included a beautifully-crafted USFPGA color poster designed by Mississippi State University, stating the health and culinary attributes of the freshwater prawn.

In 2005, Dr. Lou D’Abramo of Mississippi State University and Steve Fratesi, President of the USFPGA combined efforts in having U.S. FRESHWATER PRAWN INDUSTRY recognized for its focus as a sustainable aquaculture enterprise, using socially and environmentally responsible methods of production by hosting a representative of Seafood Watch of the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Dr. D’Abramo is in the final stages of completing a description of sustainable management practices used in the farming of the freshwater prawn in the United States for examination by members of the Seafood Watch review team at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Hopefully, this effort will result in US farmed prawns being designated as “best choice” and help introduce the product to additional market niches.



Seafood Chefs at Monterey Bay

For more information on the “Cooking for Solutions” event or the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Safe Watch List, log on to www.montereybayaquarium.com. Next year’s event will be held May 16-18, 2008.

Research Note: The following is a notice of an aquaculture/seafood related project funded in FY 2007 by the USDA Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) administered by the Agricultural Marketing Service.

“**Mississippi** - \$55,875 to the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, in cooperation with Mississippi State University, to conduct consumer and chef focus groups in three target cities to gather data on their acceptance and willingness to pay for U.S. farm raised freshwater prawn that will serve in developing future marketing efforts.”

“Congratulations to Dr. Terry Hanson of MSU. We wish you the best on this important Study!”

Post Harvest Tips For Handling Freshwater Prawn

Mike Frinsko, NCSU Cooperative Extension Service
Mack Fondren, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries,
Mississippi State University

Storage

Every year at this time we hear a lot about proper handling of prawns and their storage. The following information is a guide to proper storage procedures to ensure your products are enjoyed as they should be: fresh tasting and wonderful!

-You can keep fresh prawn on ice or refrigerated (about 38°F) for up to 24 hours.

-It's very important that the prawns don't sit in water. Place the prawn in a strainer with ice and have a pan underneath for catching the melt-water.

-If prawns are held fresh on ice or refrigerated for up to 2 days, we recommend they be deheaded as soon as possible and washed in cold water.

-For longer term storage, ice packed whole prawns should be processed (deheaded) and frozen at the end of a 1-day holding period.

-Frozen whole prawns store well for up to 12 months. Afterwards the tails appear to be softer than those of headless prawns frozen for the same period. Therefore, if you are not going to eat the head, it is best to dehead the prawn before freezing.

-When freezing prawns use a freezer bag (such as a ZipLock®). Add just enough water to cover the prawns. Squeeze the air out of the bag (caution not to puncture the bag) and seal. It is best to freeze prawns flat. Consider grouping prawns based on their size (i.e. freeze the small prawns in one bag and the larger prawns in another.)

Preparation Instructions

Freshwater prawns are a versatile and relatively easy food to prepare. Like any food, however, a little experience in the kitchen goes a long way. We suggest you test-cook a few tails or whole prawn to see which methods work best for you. A general rule of thumb is that prawns have a "meatier" texture than with marine shrimp. Many compare the texture to lobster. Cooking results will vary if salt is used and are also affected if the meat is partially or fully thawed, prior to cooking

-If frozen product is purchased, we recommend a rapid thawing under cold running water. Prawns should not be allowed to sit and thaw at room temperature.

-Cook prawns as soon as they are thawed, or begin cooking with product even lightly frozen.

-Field trials indicate that boiled prawn cooked 6-9 minutes had enhanced flavor and texture, similar to crab and lobster, respectively. Traditional short time boiling at 3 minutes resulted in prawn with good texture but having less crab-like flavor.

-Prawns that are thawed slowly and allowed to reach room temperature will soften to a mushy texture.

In general; maintain prawns on ice/refrigerated or frozen until ready to prepare and cook. Refrigerated/iced prawns should be prepared within 15 minutes of deicing (at the most). Frozen prawns should be prepared partially thawed, and cooked as soon as possible thereafter.

The majority of this information was extracted from a publication from Mississippi State University, "A Summary of Processing Research on Freshwater Prawns at Mississippi State University 1984- 1988." By: Juan Silva, James Hemsberger, Fay Hagan, and Gale Ammerman.

For additional information, please contact Mike Frinsko, NCSU Extension Aquaculture Area Agent, in Trenton at: (252) 448-9621 or Mack Fondren, Aquaculture Research Unit, Mississippi State University, (662) 325-3087



John and Natalie Relyea
Walstonburg, NC

Freshwater Prawn: Tail Yield and Deheading

By Mike Frinsko, Aquaculture Area Agent
NC Cooperative Extension

From information supplied by Dr. Juan L. Silva; Professor, Food Science and Technology
Mississippi State University

Most freshwater prawns produced in the US are sold at the pond bank, Farmer's Markets, or other local niche markets. Generally, they are offered "whole, on ice" at the time of harvest so as to avoid the time and expense required to freeze them for long term storage. Sometimes, however, customers ask very important questions that producers need to be able to answer properly. Among these are: 1) "If I buy my prawn whole, what loss do I have to expect when they are deheaded?", 2) What percent of this whole product is actually edible meat? and finally, 3) If I purchase tails-only, how much meat am I left with?

From Table 1, below, we can determine the answers to these questions. Also, note that from a whole prawn the percent yield in any category will vary according to the average whole body size.

- 1) Take a look at column 2, "tail yield". If we purchased, say, 10 pounds of "medium" whole prawn our tail yield would be 52.5%, or 5.25 lbs.
- 2) If you wanted to know how much meat you were purchasing when you buy "medium" whole prawn take a look at column 3, "meat yield". The same 10 pounds of "medium" whole prawn would provide 42.9 % or 4.29 lbs tail meat.
- 3) For a 10 lb. purchase of "medium" tails, not whole prawn, you would get 81.6% meat or 8.16 pounds of meat.
- 4) For those considering large scale processing, Table 2 describes the time required to dehead your product. Calculations are based on average size. This information is especially useful when calculating labor costs.

Table 1. Tail and Meat Yield by Size of Prawn

Category	Tail yield ¹ %	Meat yield ² %	Meat from tail
			yield ³ %
Small	55.9	45.4	81.1
Medium	52.5	42.9	81.6
Large	48.6	N/A	N/A
Jumbo	44.5	N/A	N/A
Female	56.2	35.8	63.7



Deheading prawn, Kenly, NC

Table 2. Time to Dehead 100 Prawns by Hand (by size)

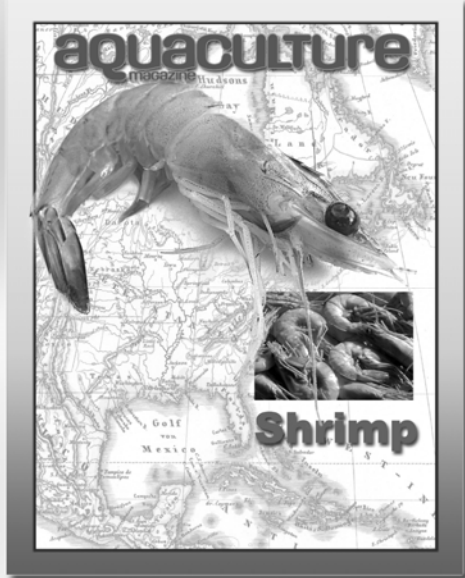
Prawn Category	Avg count (prawns/lb)	Total whole wt (lb)	Deheading time (min)	Deheaded wt (lb)	Deheaded yield (%)
Jumbo	6.6	15.1	9	6.1	40.6
Large	8.5	11.7	5.6	5.6	48.1
		(± 0.8)	(± 2.1)	(± 0.8)	
Medium	17.6	5.7	5.8	3	52.1
		(± 0.7)	(± 0.6)	(± 0.2)	
Small	45.5	2.2	5.6	1.2	56
		(± 0.3)	(± 1.0)	(± 0.2)	
BE Female	15.7	6.4	5.5	3.4	53.1
		(± 0.5)	(± 1.3)	(± 0.1)	



Boiled prawn tail, NC

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