



SOUTHEASTERN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

H O T L I N E S

FEBRUARY 2006

MOTE MARINE LAB BECOMES A FOR PROFIT SEAFOOD COMPANY

According to *Seafood Business*, December 2005, page 12, Florida's *Mote Marine Lab*, which depends on the state and federal government for large research grants, is entering the seafood business and intends to sell their shrimp and sturgeon on the US market. *Mote Marine* recently opened a 200-acre Aquaculture Park in Sarasota. The article said *Mote* has already harvested 20,000 pounds of shrimp last October but the employees used these. In the future the shrimp grown by *Mote Marine* will be sold to a distributor who will compete with all other shrimp products. It seems a bit odd for a research lab to get into the commercial fishing business and possibly have free labor plus grant money to grow seafood and then peddle it in competition with the private sector.

- ◆ Will the land used for the Mote Aquaculture Park will be taxed?
- ◆ Will Mote have to comply with FDA and DACS regulations concerning HACCP?
- ◆ Will Mote's net profits (if they can be determined) be subject to state and federal taxes?

This newsletter is published by Southeastern Fisheries Association. Please pass it along and encourage others to be added to our mailing list.

If you want to be removed from the list, please contact us.

SFA is a non-profit association founded in 1952, charged with maintaining a viable seafood industry in the Southeast.

Robert P. Jones, Editor

SFA supports scientific most of the research done by Mote Marine Research Lab. We do not support Mote Marine Research lab going into the commercial fishing business and operating on a uneven playing field. If Mote Marine makes money in the seafood business the least they should do is reduce state or federal grant money given to them. Maybe privately endowed marine labs will corner the market on fresh seafood here in Florida. Who knows?

SHRIMP/REEF FISH SCOPING MEETINGS IN GOM

The Scoping meeting was the usual get together with the shrimp industry and anglers, who for the most part related how many red snapper were in the water and how they had to work to get bait through the snapper to catch grouper. Anecdotal of course and could or could not have validity.

As usual the shrimp representatives sat quietly and listened to the parade of anglers bashing various forms of commercial fishing but when Sal Versaggi, Versaggi Shrimp Corp., Tampa, Florida began to present his remark, a few hecklers in the peanut gallery started butting in while he was giving testimony. Julie Morris was Chair and had seen this kind of bad manners before and quickly brought order to the meeting.

The shrimp industry of five years ago is not the shrimp industry of today. The by-catch is so much less it's hard to calculate,

but the billions of pounds are perpetuated in CCA propaganda and in some of the data put before the public. The Gulf Council realize there are no accurate numbers on vessels, catch or bycatch so setting some kind of make believe total allowable catch and then closing down shrimping if it is reached, is stretching things too far. The shrimp industry trusts the system and the rule of law.

STAKEHOLDER MEETING IN KEYS ADDRESSED DISASTER AID

NMFS recently held a meeting in Key West with the fishing industry to discuss the plight of the various fisheries hit hard by recent hurricanes. The leaders of the fishing industry were glad the officials came to Key West but nothing could be done under present authority. A few options were discussed but without a strong, united effort on the part of the industry and members of Congress, not much is going to change real soon.

FDA CELEBRATES 100TH BIRTHDAY IN TALLAHASSEE

Officials of the Food and Drug Administration and state agencies gathered at FAMU to commemorate FDA's 100th birthday. District Director Emma Singleton presented medallions to the speakers who shared a history of the agency and the responsibilities of the future. FAMU President Bryant welcomed the FDA and guests to a packed auditorium. SFA's Executive Director, Bob Jones presented Mrs. Singleton with a

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

plaque in honor of their 100th birthday and thanked FDA for the professional manner in which the HACCP Program had been implemented in Florida. After the ceremonies a *Fresh from Florida* taste test was held. *Cox Wholesale Seafood* of Tampa and *Gary's Seafood Specialties* of Orlando provided the fresh fish and pink shrimp. Kudos to these fine companies for their generosity.

NOAA PROPOSES SEAFOOD MARKETING COUNCILS FOR 12 SPECIES—WILL LOAN MONEY FOR TWO YEARS AND WILL ADD OTHER OVERSIGHT

Interested stakeholders would apply for a seafood council to be approved by NOAA Fisheries. Each council would create an official identifier to be affixed to packaging material "ensuring consumers the product adheres to conservation and quality standards," the plan says. The government would initially pay all start up costs, to be repaid after two years. The councils would be funded through voluntary assessments by its membership based on seafood landings and values.

NEW PROGRAM FOR EARNING SFA QUALITY SEAL INITIATED

Quality Seals come and Quality Seals go but SFA's Seal is still around and ready to be awarded to members who have all their HACCP Plans up to date, agree to properly label all their seafood products, refuse to buy seafood from an unapproved source and have a credible Training Program for all their employees. These requirements are doable and quantifiable. The sole purpose of the SFA Seal is to reward those who do things the right way. Call the SFA Office if you have any questions and would like to attain a credible Seal. 850/224--0612

WAL-MART GOES SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES ROUTE

Wal-Mart announced recently they were only going to sell seafood products that are recognized as sustainable. What does this really mean? Wal-Mart announced it was going to work with the Marine Stewardship Council, which works

SFA'S ANNUAL 50/50 RAFFLE SET TO BEGIN

SFA will be distributing tickets in the mail for the drawing at the annual meeting, which will be held in Key Largo this June. (Much more on this later)



\$8,000 was distributed to members last year from the sale of \$16,000 worth of tickets. Let's sell all 200 tickets this year and award \$10,000 to three winners at our convention.

If you don't receive a ticket and brochure by mail and are interested in purchasing a drawing ticket just call the office 850.224.0612 or fax a request to 850.222.3663 and we will mail you a ticket.



with other green groups to only sell seafood approved by the MSC. Rupert Howes, Chief Executive of MSC, said, "*An immediate target is to ensure all seafood that already comes from certified fisheries will carry the MSC eco-label in Wal-Mart stores later this year. It is hoped that this commitment to the MSC program will encourage other fisheries into the assessment process and provide a powerful new route to raise awareness of sustainable seafood choices with the North American public.*" If Wal-Mart goes light green, will all other retailers soon follow?

SANITATION TRAINING AVAILABLE FOR SFA MEMBERS

There is a growing need within the seafood industry to spend more attention on sanitation training, which includes personal hygiene, cleaning and sanitizing and efforts to prevent *Listeria monocytogenes*. SFA has developed a sanitation-training program of interest to every person who works at a seafood facility. Sanitation and pride start at the top and go all the way down the chain. The people who clean and sanitize are just as important, if not more so, than the top-notch salesman, executive or owner. If seafood lacks quality, nothing good is going to happen in that business. The training program can be taught at a member's convenience and everyone who attends will receive a certificate that the

sanitation training occurred. The business then puts a copy of the training in their HACCP Plan to show inspectors that training is taking place in that facility. Cost is negotiable and depends on the number of people in the class and where the training will take place.

BERT JENSEN AND ELMER FRIDAY DIE

Two long time men who were part of the fabric of SFA died last month. Bert Jensen, Erickson & Jensen Seafood Packers died on January 18, 2006 and Senator Elmer Friday died on January 24, 2006. Both men served in World War II and were part of the "Greatest Generation". Bert left his wife of 52 years and Elmer left his wife of 58 years and both men had large and loving families. Bert was one of leaders of the shrimp industry and a strong advocate of preserving the Tortugas shrimp nursery area. Senator Friday was in the Florida Senate and was one of the biggest legislative advocates for the same project. The establishment of the 3,000,000 acre Tortugas Sanctuary would not have been possible without the efforts of these two men who were part of the group dedicated to conservation of the Florida pink shrimp resource. To the families of Bert Jensen and Elmer Friday, we send our prayers. May their souls and the

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

souls of all the faithfully departed Rest in Peace. Amen

SFA CONVENTION TO HIGHLIGHT LAW ENFORCEMENT AND LISTERIA

SFA will meet in Key Largo on June 9 – 11, 2006. The meeting will be in conflict with the Gulf of Mexico Council meeting in Tampa but maybe some of those who would like to attend can come down for the Friday general session and the fishing trips on Saturday. We are hoping to have a presentation by Kappa Labs in Miami on Listeria monocytogenes and other pathogenic hazards associated with seafood



that is not properly handled. We hope to have a “hands on” demonstration showing how to properly do a Listeria

swab in a seafood facility. The FWC and NMFS will be invited again to give a report on their activities and to answer questions. Good food, good people and a good fishing trip awaits the SFA attendees in June. Be There.

GAG, RED GROUPER, AND BLACK GROUPER COMMERCIAL FISHERIES IN GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS WILL CLOSE FEBRUARY 15 UNTIL MARCH 15, 2006

NOAA Fisheries Service announces the prohibition on the sale or purchase of gag, red grouper, or black grouper harvested from the Gulf of Mexico exclusive economic zone (EEZ) from February 15 until March 15, 2006. No person aboard a vessel for which a valid federal commercial Gulf reef fish permit has been issued may possess these species in the EEZ regardless of where harvested. The operator of a vessel with a valid federal commercial Gulf reef fish permit having gag, red grouper, or

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per, or black grouper aboard must have landed and sold said fish prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, February 15, 2006. This prohibition on sale/purchase does not apply to gag, red grouper, or black grouper harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to February 15 and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor. Additionally, during the closure, the recreational bag and possession limits of gag, red grouper, and black grouper aboard those vessels, which have been issued a valid federal commercial Gulf reef fish permit, is zero.

A person aboard a vessel for which the federal permit indicates both charter vessel/headboat for Gulf reef fish and commercial Gulf reef fish may continue to retain gag, red grouper, and black grouper under the recreational bag and possession limit, provided the vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat. Reef fish caught under the recreational bag limit may not be sold. The commercial fishery will reopen at 12:01 a.m. on March 15, 2006.

RAFFLE TICKETS DISTRIBUTED

Tickets have been circulated for the 50/50 drawing to be held at SFA's annual meeting in Key Largo.

If you did not receive a ticket in the mail and wish to participate in this one fund

raiser for SFA call the office 850.224.0612 or fax a request for tickets to 850.222.3663. There are only 200 tickets available for \$100 each. You do not need to be present to win.

LEGISLATORS CALL FOR MORE INSPECTIONS OF RESTAURANTS

The Tourism Legislative Committee received an audit report from the Legislative Watchdog group known as OPAGGA and seemed very upset Florida restaurants aren't being monitored as much as they should be. One legislator called for increased fees to pay for more inspectors but the restaurant industry “bristled” at having to pay the state more money. The urged the legislators instead to go back to the old way of inspecting and for the state to hire more inspectors using state money. Health records indicate 85% of seafood related foodborne illnesses in Florida happen at restaurants. Many industry processors opined that either the restaurants where people are getting sick are buying questionable seafood (which isn't likely) or the seafood is not being properly handled once it gets into the kitchens. Whatever the cause, all it will take is one massive foodborne illness outbreak to cause severe economic pain to the restaurants, to tourism and to the state coffers. SFA can help solve this problem.

We invite anyone receiving this newsletter, who is not already a member of SFA to join us and become an activist for your business. We are here to respond to your business needs in the state capital and around the Southeast Region. We can help you only if we know you and correspond with you regularly.....We would look forward to serving you and your company!

UPGRADE YOUR SFA MEMBERSHIP

Retail and HACCP members are urged to upgrade their membership in SFA to either to Associate members status but preferably to Corporate Member status. Notify the SFA office for financial methods to accomplish this upgrade. Thanks.

Goal for 2006 – 2007...

Each member sign up a **NEW** member this year!

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