



PRODUCTION UP, RETURNS DOWN

According to the latest publication of *Australian Fisheries Statistics 2004*, production of Australian fisheries (includes state-managed as well as Commonwealth) rose by 5% in 2003-04 to around 267,000 tonnes. The report was released this week by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE). Despite the increased production, Dr Brian Fisher, Executive Director of ABARE, said that “the overall gross value of production fell by 5 per cent to \$2.2 billion, due primarily to a stronger Australian dollar that resulted in lower prices for many species.”

The report contains information on the volume and value of production from state and Commonwealth fisheries for the 3 years to 2003-04. It also contains a profile of Commonwealth and state fisheries, including the species, fishing method and number of licence holders. The report can be viewed online for free or a hard copy purchased from ABARE from their website at <http://www.abareconomics.com/>

REGISTER YOUR DONATION

In January we advised of the Australian Government’s coordination of assistance for fishing industries in tsunami-affected countries by working with the states to collect fishing gear donated by Australian commercial and recreational fishers. 10 locations where equipment for donation can be registered have now been announced.

Offers can be logged through the following government and non-government agencies:

Primary Industries and Water TAS
Business, Industry and Resource Development NT
Fisheries WA
Primary Industries and Resources in SA
Primary Industries and Fisheries NSW

Primary Industries and Fisheries QLD
Primary Industries VIC
National Aquaculture Council
Australian Seafood Industry Council
Recfish West

Offer information should include the details of the equipment or gear, location and contact details of the donor. AusAID is in contact with the affected regions, and will work with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to match priority needs to the potential offers, and to facilitate distribution in the tsunami-affected countries. AusAID will contact the donor for gear that is needed, and will facilitate and fund freight costs, capped at a certain amount. Please contact any of the agencies or organisations above for more details.

EXPORT OF SBT- FISH RECEIVERS AUTHORISED TO VALIDATE TIS DOCUMENTS

The Australian Government, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has authorised Commonwealth licensed fish receivers to validate SBT Trade Information Scheme (TIS) documents for all exports of SBT. Commonwealth licensed fish receivers, registered with AFMA, will replace fisheries and Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) officers as validators of TIS documents. These new arrangements will commence on **1 May 2005**. The changes to the validation process are expected to streamline the administration of the TIS program and reduce the cost of the program to the fishery. Operators should continue to ensure that TIS documents are appropriately completed. For further information, contact Andrew McNee on (02) 6272 3263.

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR FISHERIES RESEARCH

Representatives from the Australian Government and the seafood industry have had their say this week on the future direction of fisheries research and development (R&D) in Australia. Addressing the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation's Strategic Planning Workshop today in Canberra, Fisheries and Conservation Minister Senator Ian Macdonald said the future of fisheries R&D was to focus on people development, improving the marketing and promotion of Australian seafood, and increasing the profitability of the industry.

"Everyone in the industry knows that Australian seafood is the cleanest and greenest in the world; now we need domestic and overseas consumers to heed this message as well," Senator Macdonald said.

The workshop utilised expertise from all sectors of the fishing industry with the aim of ensuring all monies invested in R&D will be targeted to areas where they are most needed.

RESEARCH LOOKING AT EFFECTS OF TRAWLING IN THE NPF

A research voyage in the Gulf of Carpentaria is currently underway looking into the effects of fishing on the benthos and biodiversity of the Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF). The 50-day trip aboard the RV Southern Surveyor during February and March is a collaborative effort between Geosciences Australia, the National Oceans Office and CSIRO Marine Research. It will be the first survey to characterise the benthos (animals and plants that live on the sea floor) and ecosystem characteristics of trawled and untrawled areas of the Gulf by comprehensive sampling. It will also be the first attempt to quantify the broad-scale effects of commercial fishing. The briefing for this research voyage is up on AFMA's website at <http://www.afma.gov.au/fisheries/npf/reports/researchprogress.php>.

SIGN UP TO BE A LEADER

Young people in the fishing industry wanting to bolster their leadership skills should consider applying for a place on the Australian Government's Young Rural Leaders Course. The four-and-a-half day, residential course will be held in Canberra from May 29 to June 2. It will provide an insight into how rural industry policies are developed and how young rural people can contribute more effectively nationally. This is a great opportunity for 18 to 35-year-olds working in the fisheries sector to understand policy development, improve their communication skills, learn how the media works and help to ensure their dealings with industry, government departments and their local communities are more effective and influential.

The deadline for applications is Thursday 10 March 2005. For further information, visit the website www.daff.gov.au/youngleaders, email youngleaders@daff.gov.au, or call (02) 6272 5836. Information is also available on the Young Australian's Rural Network (YARN) web site at www.yarn.gov.au

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