

Connecticut Weekly AGRICULTURAL REPORT

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STUDY AIMS TO BOOST OYSTER PRODUCTION IN L.I. SOUND, HOUSATONIC RIVER

By Steve Jensen

Office of DoAg Cmsr. Steven K. Revczky

The densely-packed shoreline dotted with industrial and residential complexes at the junction of the Housatonic River and Long Island Sound might seem an unlikely place for oysters to flourish.

But the Eastern Oyster is indeed thriving in the area, and a recent DoAg study aims to increase the harvest while protecting the oyster beds from any potential contamination from nearby sewage treatment plants.

It was conducted over the past two weeks as part of an ongoing oyster resource-enhancement project developed by Director David Carey and staff at DoAg's Bureau of Aquaculture.

"The goal is to expand oyster growth and cultivation in this critical area while also protecting public health and oyster habitat through science-based management practices," Carey said.

The Eastern Oyster is the state's official shellfish. In addition to drawing a premium price for their taste and texture, they also filter up to 100 gallons of water a day and so serve to cleanse the water where they live.

The study included use of a harmless red dye that was injected into the effluent outflow of water pollution control facilities in Milford and Stratford so that the wastewater could be tracked as it enters the river and the Sound.

That will allow scientists to determine where oysters can be safely harvested, and what areas of the river should be avoided.

"Oysters prefer a little less salinity so they thrive at the mouths of rivers where they meet the ocean," said Donald Ullstrom, a shellfish specialist with the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA). "Most of the Sound is actually pretty clean and this estuary is a perfect place for them to grow."

Scientists and engineers from DoAg, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's New England Regional Laboratory, and staff from the FDA Shellfish Sanitation Program conducted the study.

On May 7, the team injected 27 gallons of Rhodamine WT dye over a 12-hour period into the outflow from the water pollution control facility in Stratford.

Most dissipated in the current over the next several hours. But some lingered until the next morning in the still waters around docks just south of the treatment facility as the team set off on a DoAg boat to track the dye headed for the Sound.

A cylindrical device called a fluorometer – attached to a rope and a bright orange buoy – is lowered into the water and trails about 20 feet behind the boat, recording the levels of dye, which correspond to the levels of bacteria in the area.



DoAg aquaculture scientist Dave Lamoureux pulls in a device called a fluorometer that measures wastewater-tracking dye near oyster beds in L.I. Sound and the Housatonic River.



An effluent outflow stream from the Stratford water pollution control facility (above left) carries dye toward the river and the Sound, temporarily turning the water a distinct reddish color. Above right, the Eastern Oyster, (*Crassostrea virginica*), is becoming increasingly attractive to harvesters as other shellfish species decline.

NEW HOLLAND, PA, HOG AUCTION

Sold by actual weights; prices quoted by hundred wt.

		Low	High
49-54	200-400 lbs	80.00	85.00
	300-400 lbs	n/a	
54-58	200-400 lbs	86.00	91.00
	300-400 lbs	n/a	
Sows	300-500 lbs	76.00	82.00
	500-700 lbs	86.00	91.00
Boars	300-700 lbs	n/a	

PA GRADER FEEDER PIGS

Lancaster, PA, per cwt. April 16

		Low	High
Gr US 1-	wt 20-25	310.00	325.00
	wt 25-30	255.00	275.00
	WT 30-40	220.00	270.00
	wt 40-50	210.00	220.00
	wt 100-130	130.00	145.00

MIDDLESEX LIVESTOCK AUCTION

Middlefield, CT, May 19, 2014

Auction Open on Memorial Day May 26

	Low	High
Bob Calves:		
45-60 lbs.	55.00	60.00
61-75 lbs.	160.00	170.00
76-90 lbs.	180.00	190.00
91-105 lbs.	200.00	205.00
106 lbs. & up	210.00	220.00
Farm Calves	230.00	250.00
Starter Calves	52.00	56.00
Veal Calves	130.00	177.50
Open Heifers	85.00	132.50
Beef Steers	100.00	155.00
Beef Heifers	100.00	108.00
Feeder Steers	95.00	157.50
Stock Bulls	120.00	157.50
Beef Bulls	90.00	124.00
Boars	n/a	n/a
Sows	n/a	n/a
Butcher Hogs	n/a	n/a
Goats each	115.00	280.00
Kid Goats	90.00	135.00
Canners	up to	107.00
Cutters	108.00	111.00
Utility Grade Cows	112.00	116.00
Replacement Heifers	n/a	n/a
Replacement Cows	n/a	n/a
Rabbits each	8.00	40.00
Chickens each	4.00	40.00
Ducks each	8.00	35.00
Feeder Pigs	110.00	150.00
Lambs	95.00	220.00
Sheep	75.00	150.00

**WHOLESALE FRUITS & VEGETABLES
NEW ENGLAND GROWN**

	LOW	HIGH
ASPARGUS, 28LB	72.00	75.00
CHIVES, 12's	8.00	10.00
FIDDLEHEAD, PER LB	3.75	5.50
BEDDNG PLANT flat, 48/1	7.00	10.00
TOMATOES 25LB	21.00	22.00

SHIPPED IN

BEETS, 12'S, NJ	20.00	21.00
BEAN, grn, bu, GA	36.00	38.00
KALE, 12'S, GA	13.00	15.00
MUSTARD 12'S, GA	14.00	15.00
APRICOTS, 24LB, CA	30.00	30.00
RADISHES 1/2BU, NJ	14.00	15.00
CORN, 4dz, FL	15.00	17.00
CHERRIES, 9 1/2 ROWS, CA	89.00	89.00
CHINESE CABBAGE, 12'S, NJ	18.00	18.00
PEA, ENGLISH, 1 1/9BU, CA	60.00	60.00
KALE, 12ct, GA	13.00	15.00
BLUEBERRIES 12/1PT, GA	20.00	22.00
SPINACH, 1.3BU, NJ	16.00	20.00
KOHLRABI, 12'S, NJ	12.00	12.00
PEA, SUGAR, 10LB, GU	20.00	22.00
ONION, VIDALIA, 40LB, GA	19.00	22.00
LEEKs, 12'S, NJ	18.00	24.00
STRAWBERRIES, 8/1LB, CA	18.00	23.00

WHOLESALE ,GREENS,LETTUCE

	LOW	HIGH
DANDELION GREENS, 12'S, NJ	16.00	18.00
ESCAROLE, 1 1/9BU, NJ	26.00	27.00
BOSTON BIBB, 24, NJ	16.00	17.00
RED LEAF, 24'S, NJ	16.00	17.00
ROMAINE, 24'S, NJ	17.00	18.00
SWISS CHARD, 12'S, NJ	16.00	16.00

**USDA WEEKLY RETAIL BEEF PRICES
NORTHEAST USA, PER LB.**

	Low	High
B/IN RIBEYE STEAK	4.97	12.99
SIRLION STEAK TIPS	5.99	7.99
T-BONE STEAK	7.99	10.99
RUMP ROAST	4.99	4.99
SIRLOIN	5.99	7.99
LONDON BROIL	2.99	3.99
CUBE STEAK	3.99	4.69
GROUND BEEF, 80-90%	4.49	4.99
TOP ROUND STEAK	4.99	6.49

PA LIVESTOCK SUMMARY

Average Dressing

SLAUGHTER COWS:		
breakers 75-80% lean	97.50	102.25
boners 80-85% lean	94.25	98.00
lean 85-90% lean	89.00	93.50
CALVES graded bull		
No 1 95-120lbs	303.75	334.25
No 2 95-120lbs	268.25	304.50
No 3 80-105lbs	200.25	248.00
SLAUGHTER HEIFERS		
HiCh/Prm3-4	147.50	150.50
Ch2-3	144.50	146.25
Sel1-2	137.00	140.00
SLAUGHTER STEERS.		
HiCh/prm3-4	147.50	151.75
Ch2-3	145.25	149.25
Sel	137.75	140.75
SLAUGHTER HOLSTEINS		
HiCh/prm2-3	128.75	131.25
Ch2-3	123.25	127.25
Sel2-3	119.50	123.50
VEALERS-60-120lbs	62.75	112.50
SLAUGHTER LAMBS: ch/pr 2-3		
40-60lbs	n/a	
60-80lb	200.00	226.00
80-110lbs	206.00	220.00
SLAUGHTER EWES: good 2-3		
80-120 lbs	52.00	55.00
120-160lbs	50.00	72.00
Bucks	120-160lbs	n/a
	200-300lbs	50.00 77.00
SLAUGHTER GOATS: Sel. 1, by head, est.		
20-40lb	105.00	135.00
40-60lb	145.00	175.00
60-80lb	175.00	185.00
80-100lb	232.00	265.00
Nannies/Does: 80.-130lbs	145.00	167.00
130-180lbs	n/a	
Bucks/Billies: 100-150lbs	187.00	230.00
150-200lbs	n/a	
Yearlings- 60-80lbs	142.00	167.00
80-90lbs	147.00	195.00

EASTERN PA GRAIN

Average price per bushel

BARLEY	n/a
CORN	5.01
OATS	n/a
SOYBEANS	14.65
WHEAT	7.42

NORTHEAST EGG PRICES USDA

Per doz., USDA Grade A and Grade A white in cartons to retailers (volume buyers)

XTRA LARGE	1.31	1.35
LARGE	1.29	1.33
MEDIUM	1.17	1.21

NEW ENGLAND SHELL EGGS

Prices paid per doz. Grade A brown egg in carton delivered store door. (Range)

XTRA LARGE	1.69	1.79
LARGE	1.63	1.73
MEDIUM	1.38	1.48

ADVERTISEMENTS

The Connecticut Weekly Agricultural Report offers affordable classified advertisements for your farm-related needs. See Page 4 for details and rates, or call Jane Slupecki at 860-713-2588 for more information.

Advertisements of 35 or fewer words for job openings at Connecticut farms may be placed for up to four weeks for free in the report's new **CT FARM EMPLOYMENT CONNECTION SECTION.**

FOR SALE

1-R. Blumenthal & Donahue is now Connecticut's first independent NATIONWIDE Agri-Business Insurance Agency. Christmas tree growers, beekeepers, sheep breeders, organic farmers and all others, call us for all your insurance needs. 800-554-8049 or www.bludon.com.

2-R. Farm, homeowner and commercial insurance—we do it all. Call Blumenthal & Donahue 800-554-8049 or www.bludon.com.

3-R. Gallagher electric fencing for farms, horses, deer control, gardens, & beehives. Sonpal's Power Fence 860-491-2290.

4-R. Packaging for egg sales. New egg cartons, flats, egg cases, 30 doz and 15 doz. Polinsky Farm 860-376-2227.

5-R. Nationwide Agribusiness Insurance Program, endorsed by the CT Farm Bureau, save up to 23% on your farm insurance and get better protection. References available from satisfied farmers. Call Marci today at 203-444-6553.

53-R. Evergreen Farm for sale. West Granby, CT. 85 acres plus ranch home 2.1 acres cabin/stone fireplace. Call 860-379-1963 for info.

54-R. New Holland 477 Hayliner \$2,250.00. 4 Universal Box Brooders with base. \$350.00. 860-684-1621.

56-R. Tomato stakes, tomato twine, fence boards, custom cut lumber. Staehly Products Co. LLC. 860-873-9774.

58-R. New Holland 479 Hay Bine. Good working condition. \$500. Call 860-274-8159.

62-R. Hay Round Bales 4X5. Dried chicken manure. By the trailer load. 860-537-1974.

63-R. 1940's John Deere 2 row corn planter, \$500. Massey Ferguson 7' Sickle Bar mower with many extra parts, \$300. Holland single row bed form tool/mulch layer, \$1,500 comes with some plastic and drip tape. 8' finish transport harrow, \$500. Single row push seeder comes with a full set of seed plates and the row marker. Contact Paul 860-808-9293 or Gilligan2610@aol.com

64-R. Winco 18 KW P.T.O. generator on trailer \$750.00. 10 ft. Bush hog rotary mower, Model OR126, excellent condition \$2,800.00. 860-657-6550.

66-R. Used Tobacco netting. Great to cover berry bushes. Please Call 860-683-0266.

67-R. Tree length logs-hardwood. Cut in the spring 2013 and 2014. Located in Easton. 203-445-1948.

69-R. Receive phone alerts from wireless sensors when your field or greenhouse is too cold or too hot! Visit New England Farm Sensors (NEFarmSensors.org) for details.

70-R. PAK Flail SPF Mower, 8' hydraulic offset, \$2,500. Oliver 11' Transport Harrow, \$1,200. DonderoOrchards@cox.net.

71-R. GMC 1986 steel plated dump, 8' by 16' with silage tailgate. \$4,750. Telephone 860-643-5301.

55. Landpride #700 3pt poly fertilizer spreader, like new. \$350.00. Scraper blade, 6ft. fast hitch for Farmall #140. \$275.00. 203-265-6012.

72-R. Brand new 16 ft Hay Wagon custom built. Call for description. Also for sale F 200D International 10 Wheeler chassis. Call for details. Rockland Farm, Bolton. 860-324-1602.

MISCELLANEOUS

10-R. Farm/Land specializing in land, farms, and all types of Real Estate. Established Broker with a lifetime of agricultural experience and 40 years of finance. Representing both Buyers and Sellers. Call Clint Charter of Wallace-Tustin Realty (860) 644-5667.

CT FARM EMPLOYMENT SECTION

57-R. Full-time master hydroponic grower position available in Bridgeport. Must be highly motivated, have experience with large computer controlled greenhouse, nutrient film technique growing technology and supervising others. Competitive salary and benefits. www.bootcampfarms.com/jobs

STUDY AIMS TO BOOST OYSTER PRODUCTION IN L.I. SOUND, HOUSATONIC RIVER (Continued from Page 1)

A GPS computer screen in the boat's small cabin showed the concentrations of dye detected by the fluorometer in colors ranging from green for low levels, yellow for moderate and red for the highest.

"We're looking to see where the dye trail ends," said Yaping Ao, an FDA engineer who assisted in the study. "Turn west and let's see what happens," she instructed DoAg boat Captain Tom Barrell.

He steers the boat toward the natural "plume" marking the border where fresh water meets salty. Levels of the dye – and therefore the wastewater it is tracking - decreased considerably as soon as the boat crossed the line.

"It dropped down as soon as we hit it," Barrell said.

That caused the tracking line on the GPS computer screen to transition from a moderate yellow to a lower-level green, indicating that wastewater rapidly dilutes when it reaches the edge of the Sound.

The team also lowered six cages of oysters - three each in the Sound and the river – equipped with dye-tracking equipment and sensors to record water depth, temperature and salinity levels to which the oysters are exposed in each area.

Shellfish samples and other data will be shipped to the FDA's Dauphin Island Laboratory in Alabama to be analyzed for bacterial and viral indicators including fecal coliform, male-specific coliphage, and norovirus. That will allow scientists to determine the areas where shellfish are significantly impacted by discharge from the treatment plants.

The sophisticated software and equipment used in the study represents a huge progression from only a few years ago, when samples were taken by dipping a beaker in the water by hand and recording the location on a paper map.

"This technology provides us with much more specific information used to determine where oysters can be safely harvested," said Kristin Derosia-Banick, an environmental analyst with DoAg's aquaculture bureau.

As the boat slowly criss-crossed the area, as many as five oysters boats worked nearby. Oysters are pulled off the river bottom by a dredge, and men on the deck pick out ones that are proper size and toss the others over the side.

The area is intensively used for harvesting "seed" oysters to be transplanted elsewhere to grow to market size. Larger, mature oysters must remain in the river. One of the study's objectives is to develop management practices that would potentially allow the harvest of both seed and mature oysters from areas of the river that have been identified as appropriate.

Oysters of any size will be required to be transplanted to offshore harvest areas for a period of time, allowing the oysters to cleanse themselves of bacteria and viruses that can potentially make people ill.

DoAg environmental analyst Dave Lamoureux Jr. said oysters are becoming more attractive as other shellfish species in the area decline.

"Lobsters are down, conch is down," Lamoureux said. "More of these guys are turning to oysters because they want to keep working on the water – that's their livelihood."

DoAg Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky said the study is another tool the agency is using to create more opportunities in aquaculture and to encourage the use of best practices in the approximately 80,000 acres of shellfish beds between Greenwich and Stonington.

"The Housatonic's junction with the Sound is one of the state's most important natural oyster-producing areas," Reviczky said. "Our goal is to not only preserve this key aspect of our farming industry, but to expand it for the benefit of shellfishermen, consumers and the state's economy."



DoAg boat Captain Tom Barrell and FDA engineer Yaping Ao view a GPS computer display showing the concentration of wastewater-tracking dye along their boat's route at the junction of Long Island Sound and the Housatonic River, where (below) two oyster boats worked on a recent morning.



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