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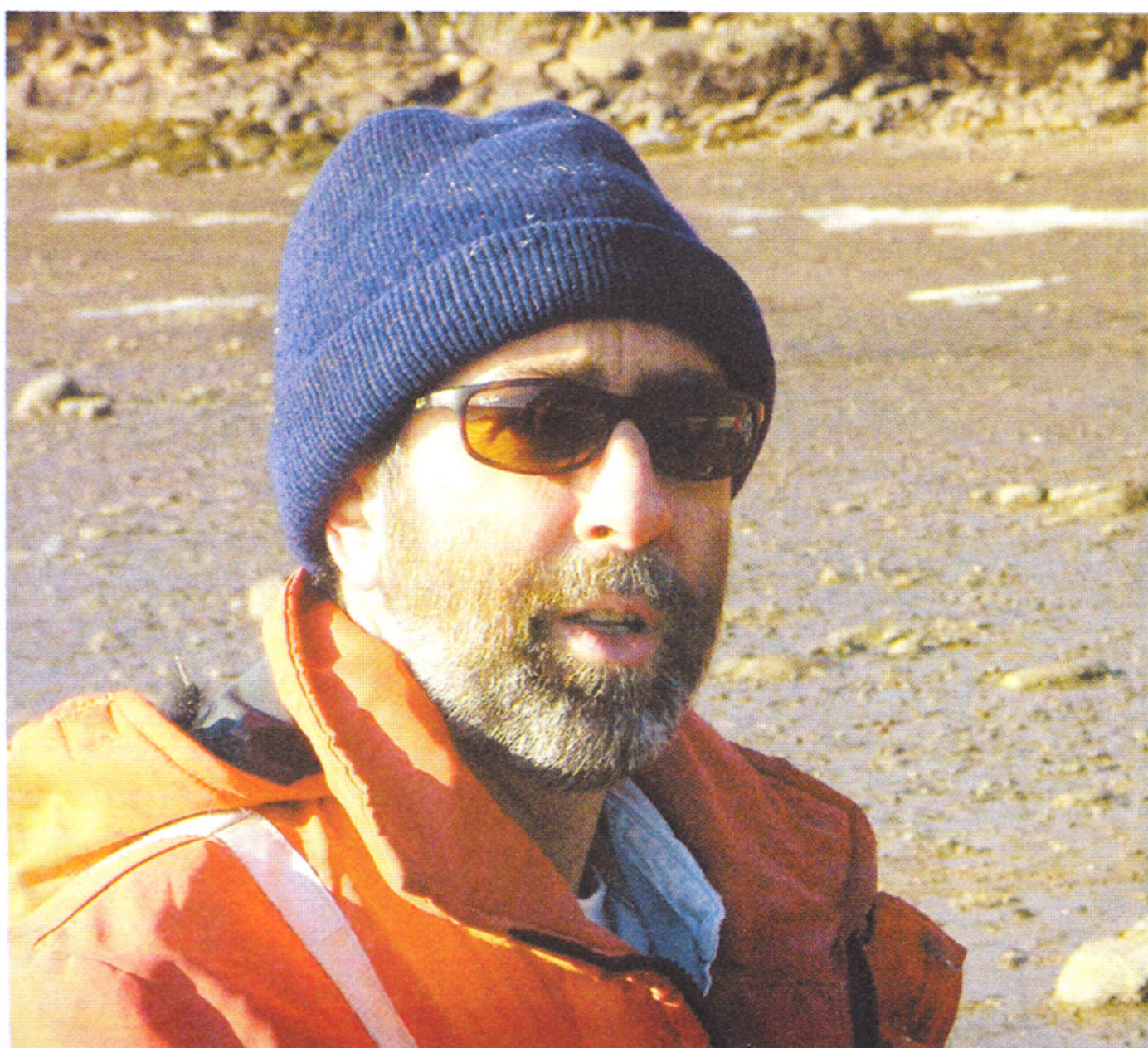
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According to DFO biologist Dr. Shawn Robinson, if 40% of New Brunswick's salmon farms started growing kelp and mussels, it could add up to 200 jobs and \$40 million in annual revenue to the industry.

## Feds invest \$2.9 million in multi-species aquaculture research

BY CHUCK BROWN

**T**he federal government is investing \$2.9 million over five years to New Brunswick researchers who are probing multitrophic aquaculture – the growing of salmon,

seaweed and mussels together.

"We're really talking about a new way of growing food," Dr. Shawn Robinson, a biologist with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in St. Andrews, said at a conference on multitrophic aquaculture in April.

The funding comes from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's Atlantic Innovation Fund. Over the five-year length of the ACOA funding, research will probe deeper into the economics, food quality, health and environmental impacts of multitrophic aquaculture. So far, research has shown positive indicators in all those areas.

"There are a lot of good reasons we should be thinking along this way," Robinson said.

And, he said, there's plenty of support for more research.

"There isn't a department out there that doesn't think this is a good idea," Robinson said.

The team of researchers involves people from the University of New Brunswick – Saint John, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in St. Andrews, Cooke Aquaculture and Acadian Seaplants.

In April, representatives of those groups gathered in St. Andrews to discuss the progress and the challenges in

developing the new, multi-species aquaculture process. The news is promising – starting with the taste. Taste tests on shellfish grown on fish farm sites on the east and west coasts were positive.

"The studies show people are receptive to the idea," Robinson said.

In the Bay of Fundy, the research involves salmon, mussels and kelp while on the west coast researchers are also experimenting with black cod, oysters, scallops, mussels and sea cucumbers.

"Food safety is critical to this whole operation," Robinson said.

He said early research has shown that mussels may even have an ability to stop or slow the spread of diseases like Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA).

"The mussels seem to deal with it; destroy it somehow," Robinson said.

Robinson anticipates that if multitrophic aquaculture takes off it will mean profits for farmers and jobs for workers on the Bay of Fundy. If 40% of New Brunswick's salmon farms start growing kelp and mussels, it will add 200 jobs and \$40 million in annual revenue to the industry, Robinson said.

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