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From left, Dr. Thierry Chopin, of UNB, Dr. Shawn Robinson, from the Biological Station in St. Andrews, David Suzuki, Sarika Suzuki and Glenn Cooke, of Cooke Aquaculture, gather at an integrated multi-trophic aquaculture farm in Back Bay for filming o

## POLL

Do you agree with the Superstore charging 5 cents for plastic shopping bags?

- Yes - it's just right
- No - they should be free
- Plastic bags should be banned
- Yes - but they should charge even more

## Suzuki visits Cooke Aquaculture

By BARB RAYNER  
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ST. GEORGE – Well-known environmentalist Dr. David Suzuki and his daughter, Sarika, were in Charlotte County last week to take a closer look at the aquaculture industry here on the east coast and, in particular, integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA).

They spent the latter part of last week shooting an episode of the Suzuki Diaries for the CBC television program *The Nature of Things* and visited an IMTA farm in Back Bay with Glenn Cooke, CEO of Cooke Aquaculture, Dr. Thierry Chopin, of the University of New Brunswick and Dr. Shawn Robinson, of the Biological Station in St. Andrews.

The Suzukis and their crew stayed at the Rossmount Inn and hoped to keep their visit to the area quiet but word quickly spread that they were here.

The Suzuki Foundation has been closely monitoring the aquaculture industry and its impacts on the marine environment and on wild species.

IMTA is the practice which combines the cultivation of fed aquaculture species, such as finfish and shrimp, with inorganic extractive aquaculture species, such as seaweed, and organic extractive aquaculture species, such as shellfish/herbivorous fish, to create a balanced ecosystem management approach to aquaculture for environmental sustainability, economic stability and societal acceptability.

The aim is to increase long-term sustainability and profitability per cultivation unit (not per species in isolation as is done in monoculture), as the by-products (wastes) of one crop (fed animals) are converted into fertilizer, food and energy for the other crops (extractive plants and animals), which can in turn be sold on the market.

Feed is one of the core operational costs of finfish aquaculture operations. Through IMTA, some of the food, nutrients and energy considered lost in finfish monoculture are recaptured and converted into crops of commercial value, while biomitigation takes place.

In this way, all the cultivation components have an economic value, as well as a key role in services and recycling processes of the system, the harvesting of the different types of crops participating in the export of nutrients out of the coastal ecosystem.

Contrary to monoculture, IMTA takes advantage of organisms functioning at different trophic or nutritional levels. It is based on an age-old, common-sense, recycling and farming practice in which the solution to nutrification is not dilution but conversion within an ecosystem-based management perspective. Production can, then, be diversified and remain environmentally responsible and

economically profitable – thereby ensuring a sustainable aquaculture sector. Chopin's laboratory works on seaweeds, the inorganic extractive component of the IMTA system being developed in the Bay of Fundy, in Eastern Canada, taking it from experimental research, to development and scale-up