

# Experts say innovation is key to industry success

INNOVATION is the key to the future success of the UK aquaculture industry, delegates at Aquaculture Today 2006 heard.

Addressing delegates on the second day of the Edinburgh conference, session chairman Doug McLeod of the Association of Scottish Shellfish Growers said: "Innovation is the lifeblood of any sector. We need fresh ideas, fresh approaches and fresh scenarios."

His comments were backed by Canadian seaweed expert, Dr Thierry Chopin, Professor of Marine Sciences at the University of New Brunswick, who said diversification is the key to successful and sustainable industry growth. "Don't put all your salmon eggs in the same basket!" he told delegates.

## Integration

Dr Chopin outlined his vision of the fish farm of the future, drawing on his experiences with Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture – farming finfish, shellfish and seaweed on the same site - in the Bay of Fundy, Canada.

He said that while the Chinese and Japanese have been practising polyculture for centuries, Western

aquaculture companies are now starting to realise the potential of integrated aquaculture. The project is in fact supported by Eastern Canada's largest aquaculture company, Cooke Aquaculture.

Delegates also heard from Hui Liu, Marie Curie Fellow and Associate Professor at the Yellow Sea Fisheries Research Centre. She outlined the Chinese industry's growth, to its current position as the world's largest producing nation – responsible for around 70% of global production. China now farms over 100 species of marine animals and seaweeds.

Scotland can learn from Chinese experience, Associate Professor Liu told delegates. Some of China's most successful species have been non-native species such as turbot, she added.

Delegates heard that species development will also play a key role in the future of the UK industry. The afternoon's session featured presentations covering developments with species including tilapia, abalone, sea urchins and seaweed.

Dr Maeve Kelly, Senior Lecturer at

the Scottish Association for Marine Science agreed that integrated aquaculture will feature prominently in tomorrow's fish farms. Highlighting an example from a site where sea urchins are grown adjacent to salmon cages, she said a tonne of sea urchins can consume up to 40kg of salmon feed a day - food that otherwise would have been wasted. A second crop such as sea urchins or seaweed could lead to significant economic rewards, she added.

## New species

Asked whether current Scottish legislation is too restrictive when it comes to the introduction of new species, Dr Kelly said that, while non-native species such as abalone present no risk to the environment themselves, there is always the risk of new diseases also being introduced.

"I think there is a good case to look at each species on a case by case basis and to examine the potential benefits to that species," she said.

*For full conference report turn to pages 16-21*

## France honours innovative New Brunswick professor

THIERRY Chopin, Professor of Marine Biology at the University of New Brunswick, Canada, and a key speaker at the recent Aquaculture Today 2006 conference in Edinburgh, was inducted as Chevalier in the Order of the Palmes Academiques by the Minister of Education, Higher Education and Research of France during a recent ceremony at the University of New Brunswick.

Olivier Nicolas, consul-general of France for the Atlantic provinces, presented Dr Chopin with the honour. Dr Chopin has been working to create an integrated aquaculture ecosystem and is partnering with Cooke Aquaculture and Acadian Seaplants Ltd., to scale up production at several Back Bay sites, growing mussels and seaweeds on floating rafts alongside farmed salmon.



Thierry Chopin