



TAFI Media Release



TASMANIAN AQUACULTURE AND FISHERIES INSTITUTE

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Tasmanian salmon farms well prepared for climate change

The Tasmanian salmonid farming industry is well placed to adapt to the challenges of climate change according to a report released today.

The study identifies key climate change information needs for the industry, scopes the likely impacts of climate change and identifies several solutions and opportunities for adaptation.

The study by the Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute (TAFI) and CSIRO's Climate Adaptation Flagship, was conducted under the Australian Government's *National Agriculture & Climate Change Action Plan: Implementation Programme*.

The Tasmanian salmonid industry is Australia's largest, fastest growing and most valuable seafood producer, currently producing 26,000 tonnes of Atlantic salmon worth \$272 million. It is predicted to double production over the next five years, and is considered one of the proactive industries with regard to understanding the impacts of climate change.

Associate Professor Stephen Battaglene, TAFI, who led the project, said salmon were currently farmed in water temperatures that in some months were approaching the upper thermal limits of salmon, but for much of the year fish growth was extremely fast resulting in a production advantage compared to many northern hemisphere regions.

He said the concern was that ocean warming as a consequence of climate change could further limit performance during particularly warm summers.

"Other predicted impacts of climate change, such as availability of freshwater and extreme storm events were also being considered as potential risks by the salmon industry," Assoc. Prof. Battaglene said.

Collaborating CSIRO scientist Dr Alistair Hobday, said the study reviewed General Climate Model data which suggested that the average temperature increase in southern Tasmanian waters by 2030 may range from 1.0 to 3.0⁰C.

“Other predictions of interest to farmers are winter wind speeds increasing by up to 5% and summer rainfall decreasing by 5%.

However, he stressed that current predictions are not fine scale enough to determine accurately the changes in different growing regions,” Dr Alistair Hobday said.

“Rising water temperatures associated with global warming would increase thermal stress and the consequent risk of disease outbreaks.

“So it is vitally important for industry to continue its current program of vaccine development and other new treatments for any emerging diseases, along with developing diets tailored to meet performance at higher temperatures.

“Despite these challenges the industry is well placed to adapt to climate change and has a very active research and development program with TAFI and CSIRO.

“The industry has already embarked upon a Selective Breeding Program and selection for the traits of temperature and disease tolerance shows particular promise,” Assoc.Prof. Battaglone said.

Assoc. Prof. Battaglone said other complementary adaptive strategies include farming in cooler off shore or deeper waters, and industry is already experimenting with new species like striped trumpeter.

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