
Media Release

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Oyster researchers to trial putting the chill on POMS virus this summer

IMAS scientists will give the deadly Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS) virus the cold shoulder this summer as part of a new approach to tackling the virus that devastated Tasmania's oyster industry over the last two summers.

In partnership with oyster farmers, the researchers will trial whether putting batches of oysters in refrigerated containers at times when POMS is most active will help to reduce oyster mortality.

"At the end of summer we'll compare mortality rates among oysters that spent time in the refrigerated containers with those that spent the entire summer outside.

"If this strategy is successful all oysters across an entire farm, regardless of age, size, and genetics, could be cooled during times of high risk when water temperatures are consistently above 18 °C."

Dr Ugalde said Tasmanian farmers had faced the loss of up 95 per cent of their oysters after POMS was first detected in Pitt Water in January 2016 and spread rapidly to other major oyster growing regions on the East Coast.

The POMS research is supported by the Future Oysters CRC-P, funded by the Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.

More information on the disease and research progress can be found at:

<http://www.imas.utas.edu.au/research/fisheries-and-aquaculture/publications-and-resources>

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