

Farmer Focus—Perkins Island Oysters (Owner Mick Kennedy)



Perkins Is. Oysters took delivery of a Mark5 grader in Dec 2005 and Leonie Holland recently caught up with them.

**Pictured L to R;
Zack Kennedy, Mick Kennedy, Glorrya Kennedy, Tamara Underwood and Luke Newett.**

Tamara: Bloody great machine. My job is less stressful and I would never go back to hand grading ever. Easy to fix problems and get the machine back on track even for someone as computer illiterate as me.

Luke: Hand grading sucked. Machine is pretty good, makes work quick.

Glorrya: Love it ,love it, love it. Can still use old system for juveniles then go on to grader.

Mick: I think it is great. Without the machine I'm F@#\$\$ed, just not competitive.

Don't have to continually retrain hand graders.

Impact of machine felt after first run through.

Does what it is supposed to have done and more.

Employees more accepting of tasks because everything is much easier.

Hope to see you at

Innovation in Aquaculture

27—30 August 2006

Adelaide Convention Centre

SED Shellfish will be exhibiting in Hall H, Booth 72.

Come and talk to our design engineer.

Our site will include

- * **A working demonstration of the Mark5 grader**
- * **Footage of grading methods**
- * **And of installations around the world.**



What's new?



In some ways the ShellQuip grader has opened a can of worms, because farmers will always want more. The usual discussion goes “the grader’s great! Now how about.....” or “what it needs now is.....”

Well we have good news! AusIndustry have awarded ShellQuip with a Commercial Ready grant to help complete the following projects:

1) Dead oyster rejecter:

Our partner company Nautelec Pty Ltd in Hobart has produced a very promising prototype detector. The production costs are looking realistic which was the drawback of the previous model. The detector will be a bolt on option to the ShellQuip grader and should be available by the end of the year.



2) 3D measuring - more options and accuracy

We have a new compact sensor to measure the height of each oyster. This opens up some possibilities like sorting nice fat oysters from average ones or rejecting “pancakes”. While we are developing the software to do those things we will also be looking at things like sorting “bananas” or “cup” shaped oysters.

3) No computer nerds required.

I can imagine most farmers at reading this article saying “**This is all very well but we don’t have any computer geniuses to run this machine.**”

A good point, that’s why a big part of this project will be devoted to keeping it simple for the operator. At present we can train an average farm worker in a few of hours how to run the machine. We intend to keep it that way, even though the machine will be able to do much more.



4) Weight grader



The grant will also allow ShellQuip to develop a low cost accurate weight grading system. There is a demand for these machines in Europe where a large number of small farms grade oysters by weight for the supermarkets. The oysters are individually packed by hand into small wooden baskets, which gives the packers the opportunity to select oysters that look the same size. This gets over the main limitation of weight grading where oysters can have the same weight but look completely different.

FAQ'S

Why should I buy an expensive grading machine when we can hand grade?

If you sell 100,000 dozen oyster per year the machine will pay for itself.

And we can put it another way: if you sell more than 100,000 dozen per year, the Shellquip grader will be adding to your profits. There are other benefits too, including high speed and more consistent grading .

Is this machine really automatic?

Yes it is! Once it is set up you will only need to switch it on and change the bags. It will automatically take the oysters from the hopper, separate, measure ,sort and bag them.

Can the Shellquip machine really process more than six oysters per second? (1800 dozen per hour)

Yes and no. some farmers with the latest Shellquip developments do run their machines at that speed, but usually under ideal conditions, i.e. the oysters are relatively uniform in size and without much frill.

We expect a Standard Mark5 and Mark6 machine to process reasonably shaped oysters at not less than four per second(1200 dozen) per hour.

Can I change the grade sizes to suit my oysters?

Yes you can. The system is very flexible and easy to change. Your training will show you how.

What if the computer breaks down?

Most problems with computers can be solved over the phone. However should a "Hardware" problem occur, our spare parts division can express post an exchange computer ready to use. This unit could be plugged straight in and the problem unit returned for repair.

Recent installations in Smokey Bay.



Banning Brothers— 6 Grade Mark5



Boylans Oysters— 4 Grade Mark5