

A Q U A C U L T U R E N E W S

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(Original photograph by Janet Stone)

Aquaculture continues to develop apace, both within Scotland and internationally and at the Institute of Aquaculture we constantly strive to keep abreast of new developments.

One of the most important current aspects of the European industry is the search for “new” aquaculture species which can provide a diversification away from established species such as the salmon. Leading this effort is a major interest in cod, for which there is a huge demand which cannot be met from sadly depleted natural fisheries. In conjunction with Lakeland Smolt Ltd, the Institute has established a joint venture to construct and run one of the first large-scale cod hatcheries in Europe at Machrihanish. This represents a major investment and is an indication of our faith in the future of Scottish aquaculture. Our External Facilities such as Howietoun, Buckieburn and the existing Machrihanish Marine Laboratory have been vital in providing a large scale capability and also a substantial source of income. Perhaps most importantly they help enable us to keep up to date with real industry problems and developments and thus maintain our relevance to industry. We see the new cod hatchery as very much a part of this process.

Meanwhile, at the Stirling campus big developments are in the pipeline for the Institute.

We are to receive very substantial funding through the University from the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council Science Research Infrastructure Fund (SRIF). This will enable us to make major equipment improvements and to refurbish large parts of the Institute. These will be the biggest improvements to the fabric of the Institute, probably since its inception, and will provide us with the facilities needed for successful research for many years to come. Look out for more details in future issues of Aquaculture News!

Because of our Grade 5 award in the recent Research Assessment Exercise we have received significant extra funding from the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council. Apart from helping to improve our overall financial position we have also been able to appoint three of our most successful contract research staff to lectureships. This is vitally important in ensuring staff succession throughout the Institute and in future years.

Our MSc courses in Aquaculture and Aquatic Veterinary Studies/Aquatic Pathobiology have been tremendously successful over the years and I am sure that many of you reading this are graduates of these programmes. We are now expanding our portfolio of Masters courses to include an MSc in Sustainable Development and an M Res in Aquatic Research. The former course is in conjunction with colleagues elsewhere in the Faculty and will build on our long involvement with global aquaculture development. The M Res will provide in-depth training for those seeking to pursue a research career or to undertake a PhD programme. We are sure these developments will appeal to a wide range of students. The new developments I have mentioned here will be built into our forward strategy for the next 5-10 years which is now almost complete and will lay the foundations for our continued success in all our endeavours.

PROFESSOR RANDOLPH RICHARDS

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