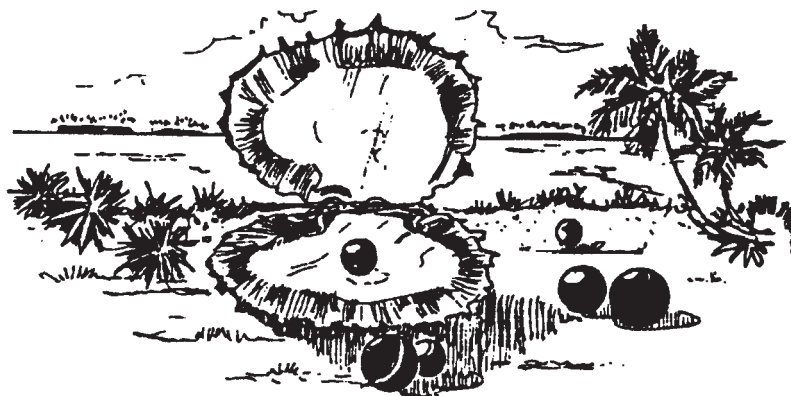


NEWS FROM MEMBERS



Moves in French Polynesia to improve standards and marketing

by **Philippe Cabral**,
EVAAM
Rangiroa, French Polynesia

A new association of independent producers has recently been created, called the SPPTI (*Syndicat professionnel des perliculteurs de Tahiti et de ses îles*, or the Consortium of Pearl Producers of Tahiti and its Islands). Its objectives are to standardise a professional and technical approach to pearl classification based on physical criteria of quality and to regroup production to ensure better and more efficient national and international marketing of pearls – basically, the exportation of a higher quality

product. The association brings together approximately 60 independent farmers in the Tuamotu Islands.

A new government agency, the *Groupement d'intérêt économique (GIE) Perles de Tahiti*, has also just been created. Made up of members of the government and professionals, it is responsible for developing a better promotion strategy for our cultured pearls on the world scene.

Editor's note: also see the article on page 12: The Papeete plan to keep pearls in black

Solomon Islands pearl oyster project initiates blacklip spat collector trials

by **Johann Bell**,
ICLARM Coastal Aquaculture Centre
Honiara, Solomon Islands

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) has provided ICLARM's Coastal Aquaculture Centre with funding for two years to assess the feasibility of farming pearl oysters in Solomon Islands.

The project stems from the observation that reasonable quantities of both blacklip and goldlip pearl oysters have been harvested from many areas within Solomon Islands on a regular basis. In view of the success of the blacklip pearl industry in Tahiti and Cook Islands, ACIAR, ICLARM and the Solomon Islands Fisheries Division are collaborating to determine whether it is possible to establish blacklip pearl oyster farms in other types of coral reef habitats in the Pacific, e.g. the more open lagoon complexes of Solomon Islands. The most important question in this regard is, 'Are there sufficient wild spat of the blacklip pearl oyster in Solomon Islands to set up a viable industry?' To answer this question, Johann Bell and Mark Gervis, from the Coastal Aquaculture Centre, have designed a sampling programme to measure spatial and temporal varia-

tion in abundance of blacklip spat over a wide area of Solomon Islands.

Spat of blacklip pearl oysters will be collected from three sites in each of five main areas (i.e. a total of 15 sites). At each site, a 100m longline will be set up. Spat collecting bags will be suspended from the longline 2–3 m below the surface. Fifty spat bags will be added to each longline every three months.

Each group of 50 spat bags will be removed after they have soaked for six months. This procedure is designed to provide a reasonable 'window' to catch any spat present during a given three-month period, and then allow enough time for the spat to grow to a size where they can be identified easily. Two types of spat collecting material will be used for the spat collecting bags: shade cloth and black plastic sheet.

The five areas to be sampled will be chosen from the following regional centres: Marau, Tulagi, Auki, Yandina, Seghe, Munda and Gizo. All these areas