

Fish Farming International

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Oyster gear from Tooltech is quick to assemble

SHELLFISH growers from Australia and afar visiting Skretting Australasian Aquaculture show in Brisbane this August will be able to view first-hand the latest equipment for mollusc farming from Australian specialist Tooltech Pty Ltd.

In addition, says marketing and export manager Reg Breakwell, Tooltech will be presenting a conference presentation entitled 'From Concept to Reality'.

Breakwell said that the many hours of design and tooling work that has gone into both the gasket and suspension hook has prompted the Company to use the embracing term of "from concept to reality" when explaining Tooltech's services.

"We take a concept or idea – be it our own or that commissioned by a customer – do the design work, then the engineered tooling, and finally moulding the product, using 3D FDM (Fused Deposit Moulding) for creating a required prototype."

Tooltech has provided a range of polymer products for many industries since its establishment in 1967, by assisting in product design, tool making (dies/moulds) and plastic injection moulding.

However it wasn't until 1994 when it was first commissioned by Cameron of Tasmania – the largest subtidal oyster farming company in Australasia – to assist in designing and manufacturing a multi-special featured oyster grow-out tray that it made its entry into the aquaculture world, and has since established an export market for its industry products.

This particular innovative and very versatile unit, called the Aquatray, fired its interest and enthusiasm for further industry involvement, to the extent that over the last fourteen years the company has designed and produced a large range of shellfish farming products – seven versions of the Aquatray, four versions of the Aquapurse, and what is referred to as "the big three" – two six foot (1800mm) and an eight foot (2400mm) oyster grow-out trays.

The products are all able to be used in many intertidal and subtidal modes such as on and under longlines, under rafts, pontoons and buoys, on rails, sitting on sea beds etc. All function very competently in various sea-state conditions. Some are successfully used for not only oysters (including pearl oysters) but also scallops and abalone. The Aquatray lid has also found a place in being used for the assembly of large cages in onshore fish ponds and has been successfully trialed in off-shore water up to 50m deep.

Breakwell says the company's latest shellfish grow-out unit is called the Aquapurse MK VI or AP6.

"It has several features that make it labour saving and user friendly. Its unique design and tooling enable it to be moulded in one piece, and then simply folded up and clip together," he says. "The only attachment is a specially designed suspension hook that has shock or movement absorption features."