NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

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RESEARCH REPORTS

Sustainable Aquaculture for a Secure Future

Title: **Marketing Extension and Outreach in Sinaloa, Mexico: A Preliminary Analysis of Preferences for Oysters**

Author(s): Francisco Javier Martínez-Cordero
Centro de Investigación en Alimentación y Desarrollo (CIAD), A.C.

Quentin Sai Wing Fong
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Maria C. Haws
University of Hawaii Sea Grant College Program

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Abstract: Shrimp mariculture, the leading form of aquaculture for the Pacific coast of Mexico is facing catastrophic losses due to disease and falling prices. Previous work conducted by a multi-institutional, international team since 1997 has built a solid foundation for diversification of aquaculture in Pacific Mexico emphasizing the use of native species, particularly those low on the food chain and with low culture technology requirements. Among the leading candidates are bivalves, which are currently cultured and fished extensively along the Gulf of California Coast, with much of the production attributed to wild capture fisheries. Great potential exists, however, to expand current aquaculture production through strengthening existing operations, either by developing new markets or increasing sales in current ones according to consumer preferences. From the Mexican government's perspective, specifically from CONAPESCA (National Aquaculture and Fishery Commission), economic diversification for aquaculture is stated as a prioritized policy goal. Today, the most available and feasible biotechnologies for species diversification in the country are tilapia and oyster farming (Martínez-Cordero 2007). In the last three years the Program *Alianza para el Campo* (Alliance for the countryside), which is the main federal program operated at the national level that promotes and supports the development of aquaculture projects, has financed tilapia and oyster projects at different scales of operation in many states. Social groups, like cooperatives, are usually selected to receive support for oyster farming, and in Sinaloa, coastal communities have benefited from this program. This includes fishermen entering aquaculture activities for the first time, which the Mexican government calls system conversion. Women's groups are also being involved in oyster culture efforts by the Autonomous University

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of Sinaloa. While monetary assistance has been given to help in the establishment of new aquaculture enterprises, little work has been done to assess the social and economic impacts of increased production. Moreover, research on assessing market demand for said species and assisting farmers in market identification and market penetration strategies is lacking. The objective of this work is to assist oyster aquaculture cooperatives in the region of Bahia Santa Maria (BSM), Mexico, to identify opportunities for the marketing of oysters within the state of Sinaloa.

This abstract was excerpted from the original paper, which was in Marine Resource Economics 24:89-95, 2009.

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