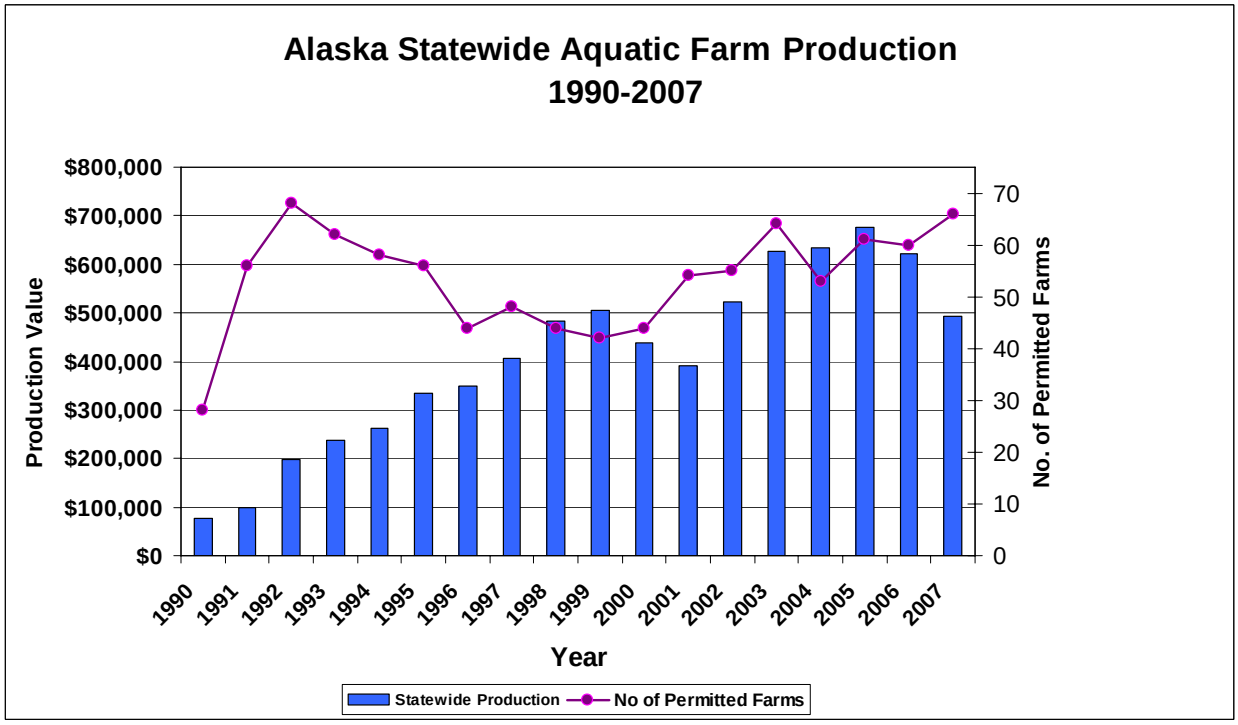
Alaska Aquatic Farm Program

Status and Production

Currently, there are 69 farm sites, one hatchery, and 4 nurseries approved to operate in the state. Total acreage permitted for aquatic farming is 330 acres, the same number of acres that were permitted in 2007.

Table 1 shows historical statewide aquatic farm production in Alaska. Based on 2007 data which is most complete, production totaled $493,458 with production almost evenly divided between southcentral and southeast Alaska. Peak production for the industry was in 2005 and totaled $676,045. Over 92% of the production came from the sale of Pacific oysters and the remaining 8% was predominately for littleneck clams sales. Littleneck clam production went down 31% from FY 2006 totals.

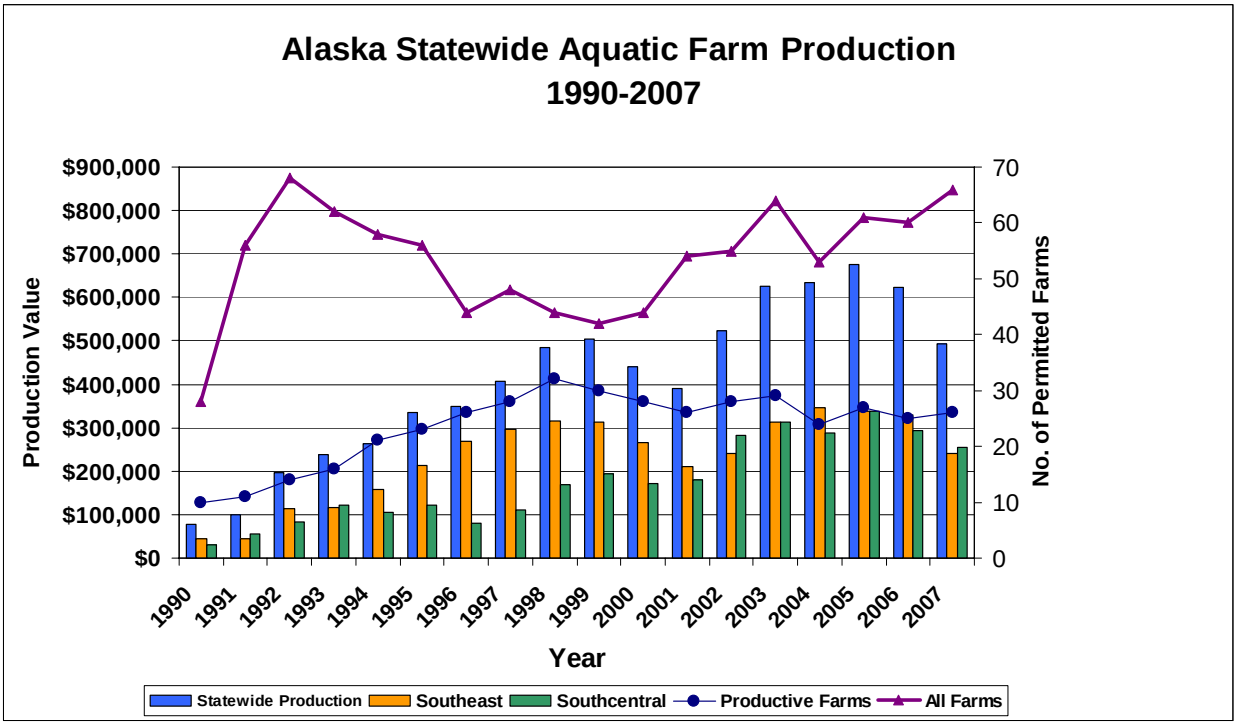
Table 1:



Calendar year 2008 annual reports are not due to ADF&G until January 15, 2009. Production projections are not available at this point in time.

Table 2 shows the number of farms that had production versus those that were permitted, since 1990. The percentage of active farm sites has been consistently in the 40-50% range since 2000 and peaked at 73% in 1999.

Table 2:



Note that farms are required to show increases in production over a five year period. DNR requires that by the 5th year, the lease holder must meet a commercial-use requirement for production that is equivalent to $3,000 per acreage up to $15,000 maximum.

In-water inventory for Pacific oysters at aquatic farm sites at the end of 2007 was 13,067,030 with the potential marketable value of $6,097,076. This is 68% increase from 2006 year-end inventory which was 8,902,721. The inventory estimate was based on farm gate values of an average of close to 0.47/oyster.

Aquatic farm employment in 2007 showed 52 people were employed at farm sites totaling 2,011 days of work. This was a decrease from the 2006 aquatic farm employment which had 71 people and 2,848 days of work.

Permitting

In calendar year 2008, ADF&G staff issued 2 new operation permits, 5 operation permit renewals, amended 4 operation permits, completed transfer of 4 permits to new permit holders, and conducted 19 site inspections to determine compliance with permit conditions.

In addition, ADF&G has completed 100% of all the aquatic farm sites that are operating have a current aquatic farm site operation permit. In comparison, over half of the operation permits were expired in 2003. This renewal effort provided current permits for 38 farm sites.

Staff issued 78 transport permits, 9 acquisition permits, and 2 fish resource permits for enhancement research projects.

Certification
Five Pacific oyster seed suppliers were certified in 2008, two of which are in the Lower 48 (Coast Quilcene, and Kona Coast). Pacific oyster seed stock supplies were not adequate to meet demands of the farmers this last year.

Hatchery
The number one goal of the shellfish industry is the availability of high quality seed for farmers use. The Mariculture Program has been working with Jeff Hetrick, Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery Manager, for over a year to develop a Hatchery Management Plan which includes details on anticipated seed production and transport to farms, disease control measures, planned brood stock acquisition and schedule, and specific and anticipated breeding practices to maintain and improve genetic fitness. This Management plan is similar to what is required of the Alaska salmon hatcheries and will help in planning for future activities the hatchery plans to do and ensures that hatchery operations are producing spat from native species with sufficient genetic diversity.

Mariculture Development Zones
Before the passage of HB 208, the ASGA and the Alaska Marine Advisory Program worked with ADF&G, ADNR, ADEC, ADGC, the Southeast Conference, the Alaska Cooperative Extension Service, and numerous other organizations, were working on designation of Mariculture Development Zones with an overall purpose of improving rural economies through the expansion of an environmentally sound mariculture industry. ADF&G is working with Ray Ralonde, Alaska Marine Advisory Program Aquaculture Specialist, to resurrect this important effort in the coming years.