

MARINE AQUARIUM COUNCIL

Certifying Quality and Sustainability in the Marine Ornamentals Industry

MAC NEWS - 2nd Quarter 1999

Welcome

Welcome to the second issue of MAC News. As we approach the mid-point in our first full year, I am pleased to be able to provide you this update on MAC activities and progress - and the interest in MAC from around the world. If you received this copy of MAC News directly, you are part of the MAC Network mailing list. If you know someone that should be part of the MAC Network, please encourage them to visit the MAC website at www.aquariumcouncil.org and submit the simple form available at the site.

Moving Forward on Certification Development

Several important activities are underway in the Philippines that will contribute significantly to bringing certification to reality. The first is an analysis of the ornamentals supply chain that will:

- a) Propose a **certification documentation system** for tracking "units" of marine aquarium organisms from source through to export (and beyond to retail); and
- b) Recommend **aquarium holding/transport systems and facilities** that allow a "unit" of certified ornamentals to be kept physically intact and identifiable from source through to export.

The second study is a "**Chain of Custody Cost/Benefit Analysis**" of the supply chain in the **Philippines** by a team of MBAs from the Kellogg School of Business at Northwestern University, building on the initial work the "K-Corps" MBA team conducted for us in 1998. The team will:

- a) Evaluate the operational steps from collectors to exporters, identify the steps best suited for certification audit, and make recommendations for audit standards and measures;
- b) Analyze the costs and benefits of compliance with certification at each link of the chain, including fixed vs. variable costs/benefits and tangible vs. intangible costs/benefits; and

c) Assess the price premium for certification at each stage of the supply chain that is needed to offset the cost of compliance with the standards.

MAC is working on convening a series of **Certification Workshops at Marine Ornamentals '99** (Hawaii, 18-20 Nov 1999). These round table sessions at the MO '99 conference may include the following topics, depending on the level of interest and the availability of core participants:

- Introduction of Proposed Certification Standards for the Marine Ornamentals Industry
- Certification and Collector/Community Issues
- Water Quality, Husbandry and Handling Standards for Certification
- Certification Documentation System for the entire "Chain of Custody"
- Quality and Sustainability Issues in the South Pacific Ornamentals Industry
- Quality and Sustainability Issues in the Philippines and Indonesia Ornamentals Industry
- Certification of Cultured Organisms
- Economics and Trade Information in the Ornamentals Industry

Information on the MAC workshops at MO '99 will be available at the conference website as soon as they are firmed up. Check http://www.soest.hawaii.edu/SEAGRANT/marine_ornamentals99/

MAC Outreach and Networking

MAC will be holding informal **briefing sessions on certification and labeling for the hobby and industry at MACNA XI** (Louisville, KY, 10-12 Sept, 1999). We encourage you to participate in MACNA and visit the MAC briefing sessions to put your questions to us about certification and labeling and talk to your colleagues who are directly involved in MAC's efforts (and enjoy some refreshments).

Increasingly, **MAC is being recognized as the global process for sustainability in the marine ornamentals industry** and we are being asked to inform important meetings about certification, labeling and the development of MAC as a 3rd party multi-stakeholder body. In the past 3 months, we have made presentations at several key gatherings, including:

- Indonesia Workshop on Marine Products Certification
- Marine Stewardship Council Conference on "Sustainable Fisheries - Options for the Future"
- UN Commission on Sustainable Development
- World Aquaculture Society Annual Conference
- Aquarama '99

There has been **considerable interest in MAC and certification** at all of these events and follow up discussions on helping MAC achieve its goals and expand the MAC Network.

MAC is working to ensure that the United States Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF) is aware of certification and labeling and the considerable opportunity for collaboration between MAC and the USCRTF in ensuring that the harvest and trade in ornamentals is sustainable.

The USCRTF was established in June 1998 to expand and coordinate the work of federal agencies to protect coral reefs, including addressing the sustainable harvest and trade in reef species. MAC was invited to the March USCRTF meeting where our presentation on certification and labeling generated considerable interest. This was followed this up with a MAC briefing in Washington DC that was attended by most USCRTF agencies. We subsequently provided extensive written comments on the opportunities for collaboration on certification development, education, awareness raising and other areas and are following this up with them.

MAC collaborated with the South Pacific Forum to produce a report on "**Marine Ornamentals Trade: Quality and Sustainability for the Pacific Region**" that will be published soon. The SP Forum is the inter-governmental body for the 16 Pacific Island countries and is very interested in working with MAC to ensure that the marine ornamentals industry in the Pacific region is environmentally sound and sustainable.

MAC in the News and on the Net

- MAC is the focus of the June editorial in **Freshwater and Marine Aquarium** by Dennis Gallagher (former MASNA President and current MAC Board member) which centers on our Dec 98 Philippines multi-stakeholder workshop and Dennis' engaging presentation to that gathering.

- The May 99 issue of the **OFI Journal** includes a feature on MAC and the development of certification and labeling and was distributed widely by John Dawes of Ornamental Fish International (a MAC Board member) at Aquarama '99 in Singapore.

- In it's series on marine aquarium industry "Pioneers", **Tropical Fish Hobbyist** will feature an interview with Phil Shane (President of Quality Marine Inc. and MAC Board member) in an upcoming issue in which Phil emphasizes the importance of MAC to the future of the industry.

On the web, **links to the MAC site are being included by an ever expanding number of organizations** - such as MASNA, OATA, OFI - and many individual companies. The Marine Aquarium Societies of North America is taking this further by posting the MAC News in its "MAC Update" section on their website (<http://masna.org/>) allowing a wide range of hobbyists to access the news. We encourage you to **establish a MAC link with your website** to help promote a sustainable, environmentally sound aquarium hobby and industry. **We will be updating and expanding the MAC website (www.aquariumcouncil.org) in the months to come** and your suggestions are welcome.

For More Information

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