Investing in Commercial Hard Clam Culture:
A Comprehensive Guide to the South Atlantic States

Florida Sea Grant College Program
NCRI
National Coastal Resources Research & Development Institute
INVESTING IN COMMERCIAL HARD CLAM CULTURE:
A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE SOUTH ATLANTIC STATES

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PREFACE

Per capita consumption of fish and shellfish products in the U.S. has increased almost 25 percent throughout the decade of the '80s. Harvest of wild stocks is not increasing at the same rate because stocks are limited. Average price for hard clam meats has increased nationwide with an even greater increase occurring in the South Atlantic. The potential is now great for rapid development of hard clam culture. It is necessary to further develop commercially viable aquaculture techniques and information so that existing and potential seafood producers can supply the growing demand and the industry can develop.

A substantial amount of biological research has been completed from Virginia through Florida on hard clam culture during the last decade. Clam farmers are beginning to use this technology. However, two of the current major limiting factors to industry development are public education and economic information. This guide focuses on both these factors. Six clam culture biologists and five economists wrote this guide on the economic feasibility of clam culture to provide the basis on which interested persons can make realistic economic decisions on whether to begin a hard clam culture system. Although the guide is intended as a self-help manual for potential clam culturists and investors, the authors themselves and others at their institutions can assist in industry development through their public education and Sea Grant extension programs.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to provide possible investors and hard clam culturists with basic operational and financial information and a method to analyze their own economic potential. Using it should allow making rational decisions about clam culture investment. A major focus of the guide is the presentation of analyses of culture technique components in tabular format. These analyses include investment requirements and sample cost and return budgets for each clam culture stage. Although produced for the South Atlantic region, the guide should be useful in all areas where clam farming has potential.

Potential investors and hard clam culturists are advised to modify the data and economic projections based on their own locations and economic situations. While the authors have made every attempt to produce realistic assumptions and analyses, investors and farmers should use these data at their own risk. The authors and the institutions and agencies they represent are not responsible for the economic consequences of decisions based on this guide.

Some potential investors and farmers may want to read and use each major section as shown in the Table of Contents and flow chart on the next page. The flow chart provides a summary "road map" for the important issues and questions covered in the guide. Other readers may only be interested in certain sections if they are already involved in clam culture. The flow chart (Figure 1) also contains page numbers for each highlighted major section.
Figure 1. Guide Flow Chart

- State by State History of Clamming page 1
- Learning About Culture page 4
- Sea Grant page 4
- Research Laboratories page 5
- Organizations & Agencies page 5
- Associations page 7
- Printed Materials pages 6, 7, and 8
- Beginning a New Culture System Facts to Know First page 9
  - Biology page 9
  - Economics page 9
  - Site Selection page 10
  - Permitting & Leasing page 12
- Determines
  - Which Hatchery System? page 20
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