

SAMOA RECEIVES GIANT CLAM BROODSTOCK FROM TONGA

Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands - SAPA

Samoa's Fisheries Department (SFD) is currently experimenting with commodities such as giant clams, sea urchins, tilapia, and trochus in areas of reproduction, grow-out and feeding. Giant clams are one of the most successfully cultured species by the SFD. There are however, no commercial aquaculture activities in Samoa.

The SFD has an extensive **community-based fisheries management (CBFM) programme** involving at least 80 coastal villages on both the main islands of Samoa - Upolu and Savaii. Most of these villages have established **marine protected areas (MPAs)** that are off-limits to fishing activities.

As with many other invertebrates, the natural abundance of giant clams has declined significantly over the years. Thus, the main aim for culturing clams in Samoa is conservation. As part of their CBFM programme, the SFD provides selected villages with juvenile clams for grow-out in their MPAs and trains community members on how to care and maintain them. The long-term view, however, is to commercialize this activity as a source of alternate livelihood and income for coastal communities.

The SFD faced a major setback in their efforts when Cyclone Heta hit Samoa in January 2004. The Department lost almost all of its broodstock clams kept at the Palolo Deep Marine Reserve in Apia.

In response to SFD's request for assistance, FAO provided its support to replenish their broodstock as well as procure two large holding tanks for holding the clams at their mariculture hatchery in Toloa.

Two species namely, *Tridacna gigas* and *T. derasa*, were translocated by air from Tonga with support of the Tonga's Ministry of Fisheries. Samoa has, to-date, received about 180 broodstock clams, now thriving well in the Palolo Deep Marine Reserve.

With the recent regional concerns over biosecurity risks associated with transboundary movement of aquatic species, this translocation also prompted the SFD to formulate and implement an **Import Risk Analysis (IRA)** (see related articles on page 25) for introducing the giant clams to Samoa. The IRA was carried out in collaboration with the Samoan Quarantine Department, Division of Environment and Conservation and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

The SFD re-commenced its giant clam spawning activities in January 2006. Several coastal village communities have also applied for FAO's Telefood Special Funds to commence their giant clam nursery farms. A marketing study, carried out by the SFD and the US Peace Corps in 2004, to explore the aquarium market for giant clams in the United States, looks very promising. It is envisaged that, with the assistance from SFD, coastal communities will consider giant clam farming as an alternative means of income, and managing their coastal fisheries.

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SAMOA FISHERIES DEPARTMENT

Stocking of juvenile giant clams in a community managed marine protected area at Fagalii Village by a Samoan Fisheries Officer