P.R. #4

PACIFIC OYSTER SEED

In the spring of 1947 importations of Pacific oyster seed from Japan were resumed for the first time since before the war. Major plantings of this seed were made in Tillamook Bay and Coos Bay with additional trial plantings in various other localities in Oregon. In addition to the standard commercial variety of oyster seed from the Sendai area, which was purchased by the oyster growers here, the Japanese seed oyster industry sent a trial shipment of a southern variety of Ostrea gigas from the Kumamoto area. These were claimed to be a smaller oyster of excellent flavor, it being hoped that they might develop into a better "cocktail" or "delicacy" type oyster than their larger northern counterpart. Ten cases of this experimental seed were planted the last of April in various bays and areas in Oregon by the Oregon Fish Commission.

The first of August some of these plantings were examined in Tillamook and Yaquina Bays. The following table gives the average size of these oyster in millimeters. Length is the longest distance of the actual shell disregarding projecting "frills" etc., starting from the umbo, while width is the distance across the shell perpendicular to the length line at its center. The L/W column gives the numerical result when the length is divided by width to give a proportionality figure for the shell.

1947 PACIFIC SEED OYSTER PLANTINGS
Size in mm. as of Aug. 1947

Where Planted	Length	Width	L/W
Regular Seed:			
Tillamook - low ground	42.0	27.4	1.53
- low ground	43.9	28.1	1.56
- intermediate	35.7	23.4	1.53
- high ground	38.0	25.6	1.48
Yaquina - - lagoon	34.7	20.6	1.68
- Newport	28.4	18.9	1.50
Kumamoto variety:			
Tillamook - low ground	33.6	21.1	1.58
- high ground	29.1	20.7	1.59
Yaquina - - lagoon	24.4	15.2	1.64

It will be seen that as expected there was some difference in growth of oysters planted in different areas. It should be remarked that the plantings in the Yaquina Bay lagoon were inadvertantly made in an area of settling mud tending to bury them. This was reflected in an extremely excessive mortality (the only place any appreciable mortality was found), and in the length-width ratio showing that already the oysters had started to develop into the proportionately longer, slimmer form required to prevent complete burrying. It also probably accounts for the smaller size. The Yaquina Bay sample marked "Newport" was a small string of oyster shells suspended beneath a cannery dock in Newport by a local oysterman, subject to unusual conditions, and must not be too strictly compared with the other samples actually located on oyster beds.

In general, however, it is obvious that the seed is doing very nicely, now being an average size of approximately 1½ to 1-3/4 inches long and a little better than 1 inch in width, ranging up to an extreme size of over 2 by 2½ inches.

However, now, while growers may be contemplating possible orders of seed for the coming year, particularly of the Kumamoto variety, it is of interest to compare the results of this variety to that of the standard type. To date it is definitely smaller but the difference is not too great. Further, the length-width ratio is as yet identical to the regular large variety, indicating that it may follow much the same growth pattern as the other in our waters. Hence, although it may well prove to be a desirable form for yielding smaller oysters it appears that it still may not be left until mature for harvesting for "cocktail" purposes, but will again need to be marketed immediately when desired size is attained, unless some method of stunting them can be devised. It is granted that this may be a premature conclusion but it is felt that it is a possibility that should be born in mind by prospective buyers.

The foregoing plantings as well as all other thruout the State will be followed and checked from time to time by the Fish Commission to give as much

information as possible to the expanding oyster industry of the State. Any persons desiring information, or possible assistance on this or any other matter relating to shell fish in the State, is encouraged to contact the Oregon Fish Commission, Research Station, Newport, Oregon, whereupon every possible means of cooperation will be extended.

Roger Tollefson
Biologist.

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