



Media Release

Issued: 24/9/2020

TURNING SALMON INTO CHERRIES

Two iconic Tasmanian companies are working together to turn salmon hatchery by-product into nutrient rich compost; and cherry lovers will reap the benefits!

Today saw the first large-scale spread of the compost across Cherries Tasmania's Old Beach orchard.

Frances Bender, Huon Aquaculture's Co-Founder was delighted to see the by-product from Huon's Whale Point Salmon Nursery put to good use.

"There's a whole range of fish-based fertilisers and composts out there and any good gardener or farmer knows they are absolutely fantastic to build up the microbiome of the soil.

"Our partnership with Cherries Tasmania is so simple – they take our fish by-product, which looks a little bit like brown putty, add it to their house-made compost, with a touch of locally-sourced council green waste from Barwick's," said Frances.

The fish waste is filtered out by Whale Point's state-of-the-art water treatment system then collected and trucked to the Old Beach orchard.

Nic Hansen, owner of Cherries Tasmania said getting to the first big spread of compost has been a journey.

"It has been a big journey and we have made a significant investment including custom-built infrastructure, tanks and trucks. We are looking to the future and see this as a 20-year investment into the orchard," said Nic.

Nic has undertaken small-scale trial compost spreads and has found that adding the salmon waste to the compost has meant an almost exponential improvement in biological diversity.

"We run a closed-loop compost system. Anything that is still too large after the first compost screening, goes straight back on for another few months."

Mrs Bender said the partnership with Cherries Tasmania is ideal.

"Before we got into fish farming, my husband and I established and ran Australia's first trellised apricot orchard. Our partnership with Cherries Tasmania is a nice meeting of our past as orchardists and present as fish farmers."

Mr Hansen said his compost system was fungi-based which sees the rows of compost naturally reaching 70 degrees Celsius +/- . This heat cooks the rows which kills off bad bacteria and breaks down the compost.

"I think we can slow the decline of our soils and the best way to move forward is to improve the soil biology so that my son inherits an orchard that has extremely healthy soils," finished Nic.

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Background

Images and video:

Background:

- Cherries Tasmania has made a significant financial investment in the infrastructure needed to make high-quality compost
- The activity is fully covered by the appropriate council and EPA permits
- Huon's Whale Point Salmon Nursery was built at a cost of \$43.7M and uses world-leading water recirculation technology that enables 98% of the freshwater to be repeatedly treated and re-used
- The fish waste is removed through a flocculation process which separates solid and liquid particles first through a belt filter and then centrifuge
- Soil is one of the most biologically-diverse ecosystems on the planet. It is well-known that the overuse of synthetic chemicals degrades the health of the soil
- Slowing and restoring soil involves putting organic (animal and plant) materials back into the soil and practicing more sustainable land management techniques such as diversification of crops

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