



Photos: Neill McKee



Photo: Frank Green



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Oyster farming in the tropics

Oysters are not a luxury food in many areas of the tropics. Gathered wild by rural people in coastal areas, they are a source of much-needed protein. However, if oysters are farmed — cultivated instead of simply gathered — their potential can be greatly increased both as a source of food and income.

Oysters are well-suited for "domestication." Because they are sedentary eaters that filter their food from the surrounding water they require no cages or enclosures. Their nutritional requirements are simple. They can be stocked at fairly high densities, with no apparent loss of growth. Harvesting is easy. The meat of the oyster is high in protein, and prized for its flavour, cooking and eating characteristics.

Oyster farming in the tropics is a 29-minute colour film by Neill McKee on two IDRC-supported oysterculture research projects underway in Sabah, Malaysia, and Sierra Leone, West Africa. The film covers most of the essential features of oyster production — ranging from the traditional harvesting of wild oysters from canoes in the mangrove swamps of Sierra Leone to the intensive, semi-mechanized oyster industry in Japan. Along the way, the biology of the oyster is explained, and the various stages of the culture process are described. Different culture systems are demonstrated, illustrating how farming techniques can be adapted to suit local conditions and resources. Some of the problems that may affect culture operations, such as pollution and competition from fishing, are also presented.

Both entertaining and informative, *Oyster farming in the tropics* lends itself well to use in the classroom and to educational or science programming on television. It should also be a valuable tool for briefing decision-makers and researchers on the potential for oysterculture in tropical regions. For information on loans, contact the Audiovisual Unit, Communications Division, IDRC, PO Box 8500, Ottawa, Canada K1G 3H9. A postage and handling fee of \$Cdn10 is requested in North America and Europe.

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