



CURRENT "DEVELOPMENT" PRIORITIES FOR RECIRCULATING AQUACULTURE SYSTEMS (RAS)

- 1) "Sustainable" Recirc. AquaSystems (SRAS)
 - ✓ Low-Head Systems
 - ✓ Low-Energy Systems
 - ✓ Zero effluent
 - ✓ Low-Trophic Level Species Choices Tilapia
 - ✓ Alternative Feeds (less fish meal)
 - ✓ Aquaponics
- 2) BioFloc (shrimp and tilapia)
- 3) Greenwater Systems

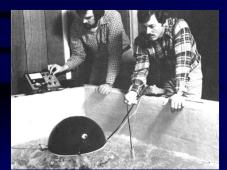
COMMERCIAL AQUAPONIC PRODUCTION IN RECIRCULATING AQUACULTURE SYSTEMS (RAS)

But it's also important to differentiate between ...

- Hobbyist Systems / Small-Scale RAS
- Commercial Recirculating Aquaculture Systems
 - ✓ "Entry-level" Commercial-Scale
 - ✓ RAS for Tilapia vs High-Valued Species
 - ✓ Vertical integration
 hatchery/nursery/processing/marketing/hydroponics
 - ✓ Industrial-Scale Systems "intensive" vs "super-intensive" systems

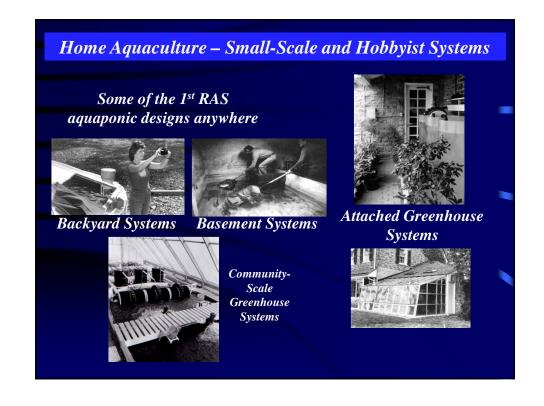
SMALL-SCALE AND HOBBYIST AQUACULTURE Rodale Aquaculture Project 1977-1983

"Is it possible to garden the water like we garden the soil?" Organic Gardening and Farming Pioneer Bob Rodale, 1976



Home Aquaculture:

- Low-Head Designs
- New Species
- Integrated ecologically-sound low-cost methods

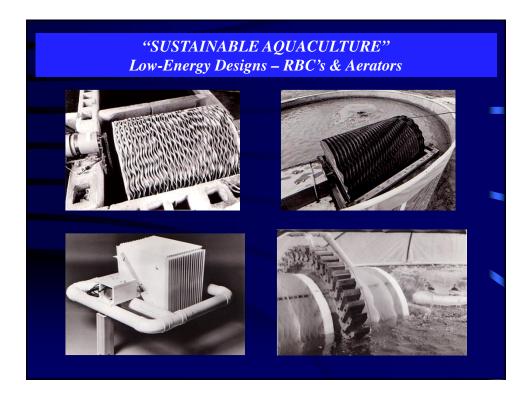




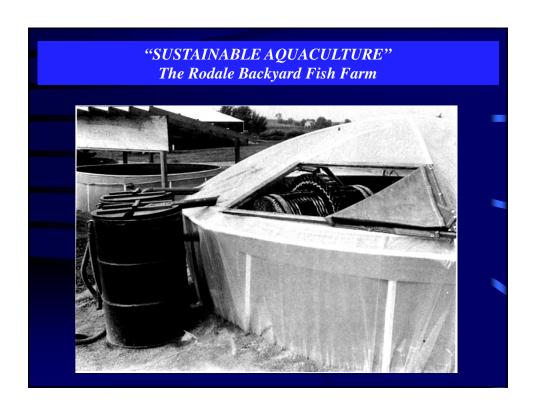






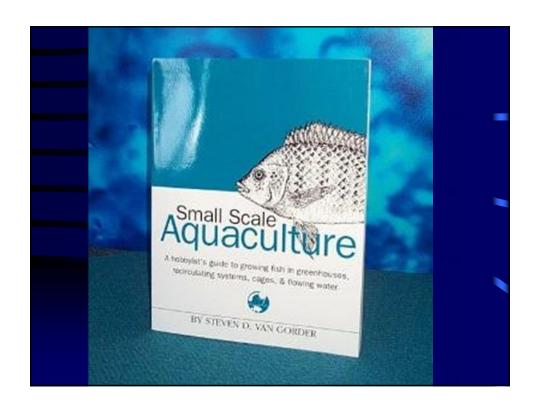








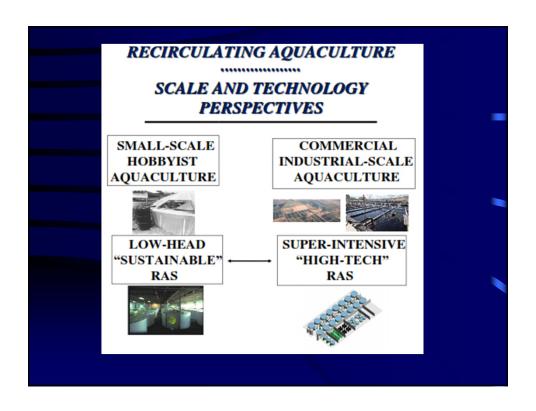












DEFINING "COMMERCIAL-SCALE" RAS (Minimum Requirements)

- Recirculating Aquaculture Systems can include either:
 - > Dedicated Fish Production in closed systems, or
 - > Aquaponics, combining hydroponic vegetable production with finfish production.
- Aquaponics can be further sub-divided into 2 categories:
 - Hydroponic vegetable production balanced exactly with the fish biomass and the feed input levels.
 - > Independent fish production and hydroponics systems, using the RAS waste stream as the nutrient source for the vegetable production.

DEFINING "COMMERCIAL-SCALE" RAS

- **❖** Commercial-scale "balanced" aquaponics
 - By far the most common design alternative being considered
 - The fish are often used only as a source of nutrients
 - Almost exclusively "tilapia culture systems"
 - Others are more qualified to discuss this topic











DEFINING "COMMERCIAL-SCALE" RAS

- ❖ Independent fish culture / hydroponic systems
 - Commercial quantities of fish and/or vegetables
 - Hydroponic nutrients derived from the fish waste stream
 ... for whatever level of hydroponics is desired
 - Must maintain state-of-the-art water quality control systems
 - Should be able to support a variety of high-value fish species









DEFINING "COMMERCIAL-SCALE" RAS (Minimum Requirements)

 Many believe that Recirculating Aquaculture Systems, including Aquaponics, cannot be commercially viable unless pursued on an "industrial-scale".

This is debateable, but ...

- Successful "entry-level" systems will require:
 - > Imaginative business planning
 - > Specialized, proven RAS technologies
 - > Niche marketing strategies
 - > Exceptional quality cultured products
 - > Significant capital investmen

DEFINING "COMMERCIAL-SCALE" RAS (Minimal "Entry-Level" Requirements)

- A realistic and carefully articulated business plan describing ...
 - ✓ An owner-operated business full-time commitment
 - ✓ Threshold level profit potential \$30,000-\$100,000 / year?
 - ✓ Established markets for the anticipated product
- RAS with continuous year-round production
 - ✓ Approaching weekly harvest capabilities (market-driven)
 - ✓ Maintenance of multiple graded populations of fish
 - ✓ Stable and dependable production
 - ✓ Technically viable/proven aquaculture designs
 - ✓ A threshold harvest capacity of fish/vegetables

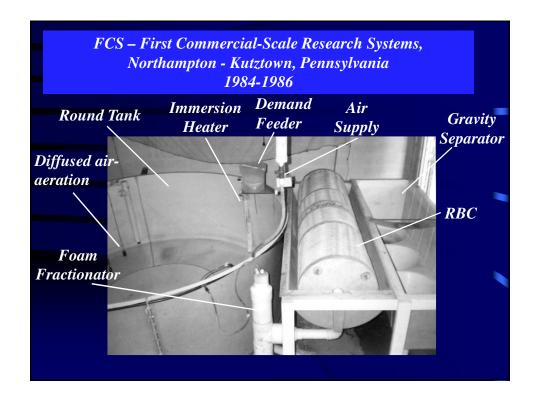
COMMERCIAL-SCALE ADAPTATIONS

Besides defining a particular minimum "scale", what technical modifications define a commercial RAS?

INCREASING INTENSIFICATION

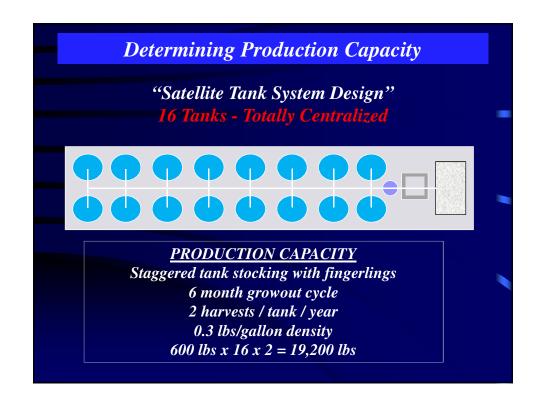
Design Categories (Unit Processes)

- Tank number, size & design
- Biofiltration
- Clarification
- Dissolved Oxygen Control –
 Aeration/Oxygenation/Ozonation
- Carbon Dioxide Control
- pH Control
- Feeding strategies
- Proportional energy costs in all categories





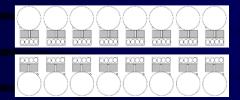




Determining Production Capacity

"Multiple-Tank / Density Manipulation Systems"

16 Tanks - Totally De-centralized



8 tanks x 8.7 harvests/year 600 lbs x 8 x 8.7 = 41,700 lbs

PRODUCTION CAPACITY

Patented density manipulation system design
Every 6 weels ...
8 tanks are harvested
7 tanks are subdivided
1 tanks is stocked with fingerlings

First Commercial-Scale Designs LOW-HEAD SYSTEMS

PRODUCTION CAPACITY

Tank size – 10' diameter (2000 gallons) (15 production tanks)

Feed capacity - 10 lbs/day/tank

Max. density - 0.3 lb/gallon

System capacity - 40,000 lbs/year (8 tanks harvested every 6 weeks)

System limitations (to allowing increased feed levels)

- Providing stable levels of dissolved oxygen
- · Controlling levels of unionized ammonia
- Controlling settleable solids levels
- Limited emergency options
- Off-flavor and aesthetic concerns

TOTAL ENERGY REQUIREMENT 2.5 HP - 0.4 kwh's/lb of production

COMMERCIAL-SCALE ADAPTATIONS

INCREASING INTENSIFICATION

- Any RAS design is only as good as its least effective unit process (measured by feed level)!
- All water treatment unit processes must be designed for the anticipated maximum daily feed input, not the average.
- * All integrated RAS unit processes should be co-engineered.

COMMERCIAL-SCALE ADAPTATIONS Tank Design - Materials

- ☐ The materials used for tank construction must be durable, smooth, inert, and non-toxic.
- ☐ If the material can be penetrated, at some point it will be, and the culturist should consider the consequences in terms of lost stocks and profits.

Tank Construction Options

- Fiberglass
- Concrete (treated)
- Plywood/liner
- Steel with epoxy paint
- Corrugated steel/liner

COMMERCIAL-SCALE ADAPTATIONS Tank Design - Configuration

- The tank hydraulics must be <u>completely</u> self-cleaning
- The tank is the 1st element of the clarification system
- All waste solids must exit the tank \rightarrow clarifier within minutes
- Co-engineered for a hydraulic retention time < 1 hour







Rectangular tank

Cross-flow tank

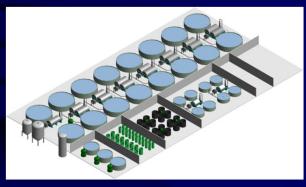
COMMERCIAL-SCALE ADAPTATIONS Tank Design – Number and Size

The tank number and size will be determined by the fish management strategy.

- This strategy must consider the requirement for semicontinuous stocking and harvesting capabilities.
- Requires designs for both nursery and grow-out systems (and in some cases larval and fry culture systems).
- The tank size and number, coupled with the anticipated density at harvest, will dictate the production capacity of the facility.
- The fish species sometimes prefers a particular tank design.

COMMERCIAL-SCALE ADAPTATIONS Tank Options - Centralization

The number of tanks maintained by each Water Treatment System determines the level of "CENTRALIZATION".



This is THE MOST important factor influencing both the "bio-security" of the system, and it's cost!

COMMERCIAL-SCALE ADAPTATIONS Tank Design - Centralization

Management Strategies and Options

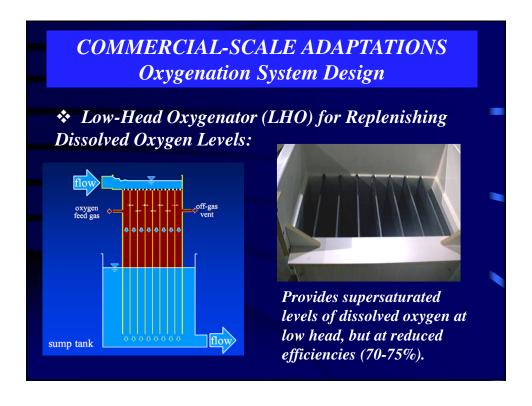
Fewer / Larger Water Treatment Systems > Reduced costs > Multiple satellite tanks sharing water > Efficient management of multiple cohorts > More potential for catastrophic loses, least cost

More / Smaller Independent Water Treatment Systems > Increased costs > Greater biosecurity > Reduced potential for catastrophic loses, greater cost

Density Manipulation > Independent RAS modules > increased production, bio-security









Commercial-Scale Designs MODERATE-HEAD SYSTEMS

USE OF PURE OXYGEN

Options

- 1. Diffusers
 - ✓ Too inefficient except for emergency use
- 2. Low-Head Oxygenator
 - ✓ Low-energy but still somewhat inefficient
- 3. Oxygen Saturators
 - ✓ Very efficient but at some energy cost

Ozone option available with oxygen saturator technologies ...

- improved water quality
- eliminates off-flavors
- > sterilization options
- > simplified tank and plumbing maintenance

Commercial-Scale Designs MODERATE-HEAD SYSTEMS

USE OF PURE OXYGEN

w/ Oxygen Saturators
Positives

- 1. Additional production capacity / fish density
- 2. Additional emergency options -RAPID RESPONSE
- 3. Simplified stock management/harvests
- 4. Ozone option

Negatives

- 1. Requires pumps @ moderate pressure (12 psi)
- 2. Requires additional CO_2 sparging technologies
- 3. More sophisticated controls
- 4. Requires rapid emergency response (incr. densities)





First Commercial-Scale Designs LOW-HEAD SYSTEMS (with Oxygen)

PRODUCTION CAPACITY

Tank size - 10' diameter (1800 gallons)

Feed capacity - 12 lbs/day/tank

Max. density - 0.5 lb/gallon

System capacity - 55,000 lbs/year (using density

manipulation technology)

System limitations (to adding additional feed)

- Controlling settleable solids levels
- Controlling levels of unionized ammonia
- Controlling levels of carbon dioxide

TOTAL ENERGY REQUIREMENT 7 HP (0.8 kwh's / lb production)

SPRAY-TOWER/PACKED COLUMN... CONTROLS CARBON DIOXIDE LEVELS

With the use of pure oxygen, it is essential to include designs for the sparging of carbon dioxide from the water.



COMMERCIAL-SCALE ADAPTATIONS Clarifier Design

Design Requisite: The clarifier must remove suspended and settleable solids of the finest particle size possible.

Particle Size Removal Capacity

- Settling tanks (determined by "residence time" but > 100 μ)
 - ✓ Gravity settler
 - ✓ Centrifugal separator
 - ✓ Radial flow settler
- Protein skimmer (foam fractionator) (1-30μ)
- Microscreen drum filter (determined by screen sieve)
- *Bead filter* (20-30μ)

SOLIDS CONTROL – CLARIFIER DESIGN



Gravity separators provided limited but effective solids control to 120μ .

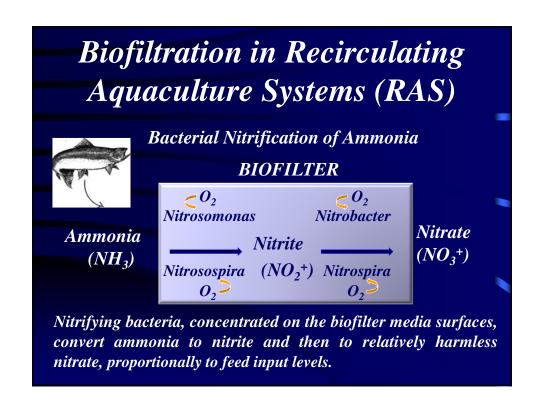
Combined with foam fractionation for removal of fine particulates.



Bead clarifiers effectively remove fine particulates to $< 30 \mu$. However, they cannot sustain high flow rate/low head design requirements.

Are excellent for larval and fry culture systems.









- Larger biofilters (1.22 m diameter) were designed and built to accommodate larger-scale fish production facilities.
- Constructed with neutral buoyancy, allowing frictionless rotation of the non-weight bearing central shaft within the guiding channels of the fiberglass staging unit.





- Rotation is affected by the injection of air below, and/or water onto a centrally placed paddlewheel.
- Using spokes and rigorous attachment methods, the media is secured to the rotating shaft, and since no gear motor is required, is rotated at full 50% submergence.



Several 10,000 ft² (930 m²) RBC's are rotated during acclimation procedures using only a small linear air compressor.



Commercial Aquaculture Systems using Rotating Biological Contactors

 For over 15 years, the larger RBC's have been incorporated in closed recirculating production facilities for the commercial production of striped bass, hybrid striped bass, yellow perch, steelhead trout, coho salmon and tilapia.







Commercial-Scale Designs <u>MODERATE - HEAD SYSTEMS</u>

COST / EFFICIENCY ADAPTATIONS

- Increased "Centralization" (4 tank systems)
- Microscreen Drum Clarifiers (servicing 4 tanks)
- Expanded biofiltration designs 4' diameter RBC
- Central pump for all component requirements
 - ✓ Combined recycle / circular flow in tanks
 - ✓ Oxygenation (at 12 psi)
 - ✓ Rotation of RBC's
 - ✓ Flow to CO₂ spargers



Commercial-Scale Designs MODERATE - HEAD SYSTEMS

SPECIFICATIONS FOR INCREASING PRODUCTION LEVELS (Increased "Centralization")

PRODUCTION CAPACITY

Requires increased biofiltration

Tank size - 10' diameter (2000 gallons)

Feed capacity - 15 lbs/day/tank

Max. density - 0.5 lb/gallon System capacity - 65,000 lbs/year

cupacity - 05,000 tos/year

(using density manipulation strategy)

Commercial-Scale Designs MODERATE - HEAD SYSTEMS

SPECIFICATIONS FOR INCREASING PRODUCTION LEVELS (Increased Tank Size)

PRODUCTION CAPACITY

Requires increased biofiltration and pumping capacity

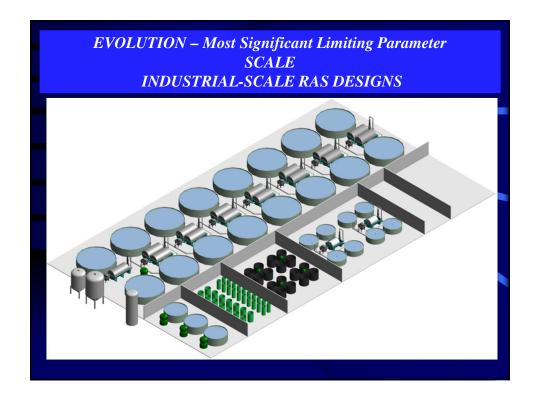
Tank size - 12' diameter (3000 gallons)

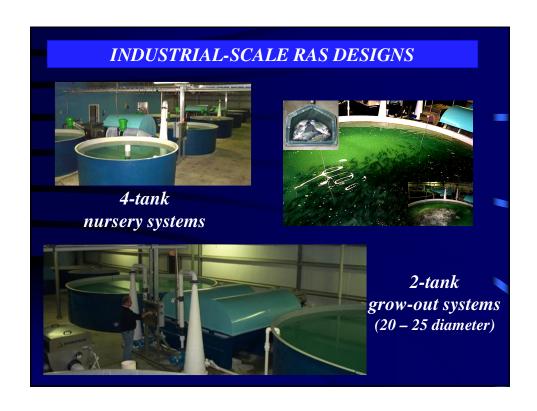
Feed capacity - 15 lbs/day/tank

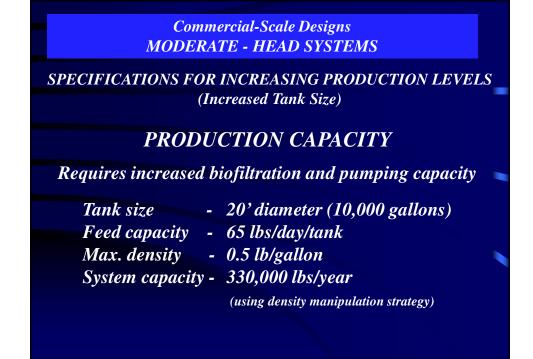
Max. density - 0.5 lb/gallon

System capacity - 80,000 lbs/year

(using density manipulation strategy)







Commercial-Scale Designs MODERATE - HEAD SYSTEMS

SPECIFICATIONS FOR INCREASING PRODUCTION LEVELS (Increased Tank Size)

PRODUCTION CAPACITY

Requires increased biofiltration and pumping capacity

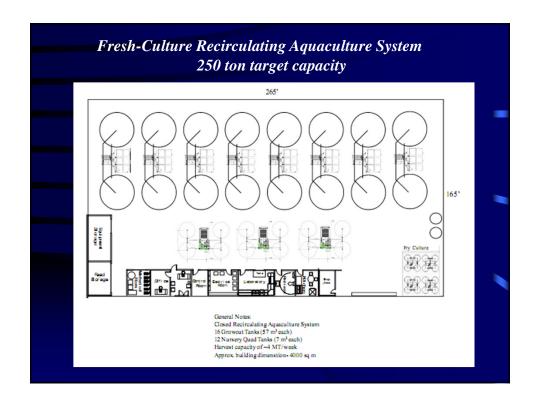
Tank size - 25' diameter (15,000 gallons)

Feed capacity - 100 lbs/day/tank

Max. density - 0.5 lb/gallon

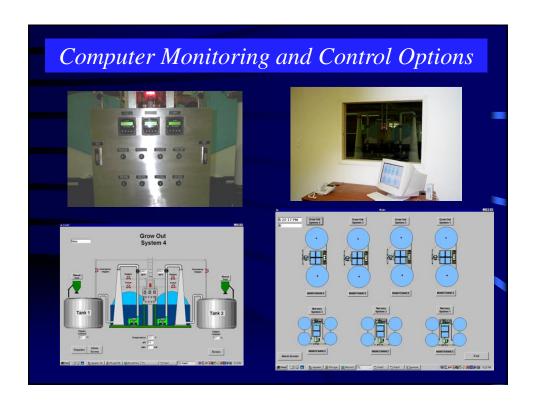
System capacity - 500,000 lbs/year

(using density manipulation strategy)















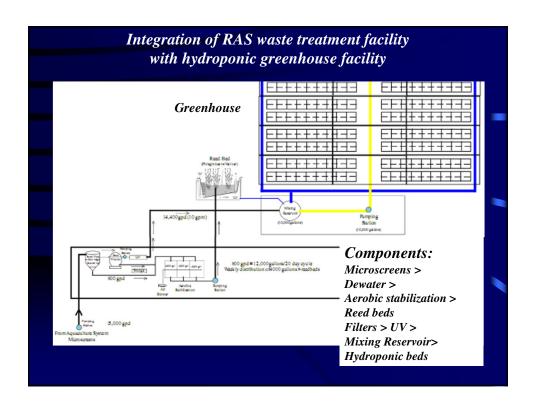


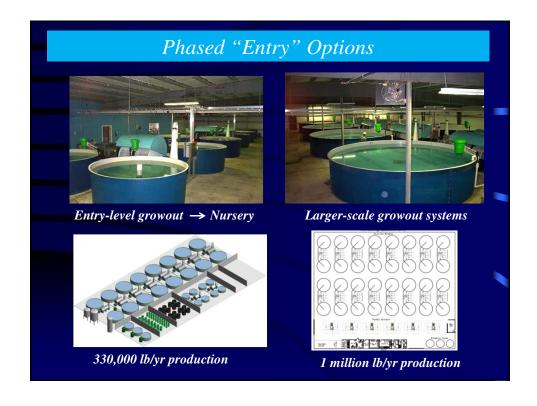












CONSIDERATIONS FOR RAS DESIGN EV\OLUTION

- 1) Higher density levels
- 2) Higher overall production levels
- 3) High-valued species options
- 4) Expanded processing and marketing options
- 5) Emergency response options (oxygen)
- 6) Elimination of off-flavors (ozone)
- 7) Computer and telemetry control options
- 8) Higher % recirculation water conservation
- 9) Waste treatment options reed beds/aquaponics
- 10) Vertical integration potential
- 11) Proportional cost of increased energy use??

