

# Fanny Bay Oysters welcomes new owner

By Mark MacDonald *Publisher*

FANNY BAY - Glen and Sharon Hadden officially passed the Fanny Bay Oysters Ltd. torch to new owner Bill Taylor of Taylor Shellfish Farms in June.

Comox Valley Economic Development hosted a reception welcoming the head of the Washington-based company that purchased Canada's largest shellfish production and processing company earlier this year.

"It's been a friendly, easy transition. We talked about this for four years, so it didn't happen overnight," says Glen Hadden. "They run things the way we do, which is kind of neat, because they understand the community. Shelton, Washington is almost a carbon copy of Fanny Bay.

"I'm really happy about it," Hadden adds. "We kept 120 acres to farm scallops, oysters, mussels and clams. We're not retiring - we're just slowing down a bit. I told them I'd stay as long as they wanted me to."

Taylor noted that he has known the Haddens for 20 years, and "they have put together what we see here - which is the future of the shellfish industry."

Taylor says they expect to see an even bigger increase in production at Fanny Bay Oysters over the next few years.

"We have an excellent staff



From left: Sharon Hadden, Bill Taylor and Glen Hadden at Fanny Bay Oysters

here, and we need to add to that," he says. "They are excellent people to work with."

When Hadden bought Fanny Bay Oysters in November, 1984, there were 108 acres to farm and three part-time employees who worked three days a week and sold 3,000 pounds of raw product to three main customers in Vancouver.

By the time the Haddens sold 22 years later, there were 88 full time employees working 435 acres of operational farm. The plant produces 38,000 pounds of 30 different types of product seven days a week to 8

countries.

Every three years, Fanny Bay Oysters managed to double production.

"We built our brand name the old fashioned way, through hard work and quality," Hadden says. "Our whole job has been investing money in maintaining the quality of the product and moving it quickly, from the growing bed to somebody's plate in Asia or Toronto."

"People from this area take a lot of pride in this place. It really helped put Fanny Bay on the map," he says.

The Taylor family has been

in business in Washington state for 117 years - since 1890. They've been in their current seafood business for 40 years, and the parent company, Taylor United, has 400 employees in Washington and 20 at an oyster farm in Powell River, plus the Fanny Bay team.

They also have a distribution office in Hong Kong, a pearl farm in Fiji, an oyster and scallop farm in Mexico, and a production facility in Hawaii, besides their farms in Puget Sound and Willapa Bay.

Taylor also produces Manila clams, Mediterranean mussels,

geoduck, and a variety of live, shucked and frozen oysters and shellfish seed for national and international markets

The purchase of Fanny Bay Oysters follows the purchase of four smaller B.C. companies in the Powell River areas since 2001. Fanny Bay will provide processing capability for those farms.

In May, 2006, Taylor also completed a \$3.5 Million, 22,000 square foot processing plant at their headquarters in Shelton, building in capacity for growth.

"Bill Taylor has made a tremendous commitment to the Valley," says Ted Benson, Comox Valley Economic Development President. "Fanny Bay Oysters have put us on the map... attracting investment in aquaculture.

"With Taylor's investment in Fanny Bay Oysters, they bring a combination of rich heritage in the shellfish industry coupled with state-of-the-art farm and production facilities to the Comox Valley."

The purchase of the 22-year-old family-run Fanny Bay Oysters company includes the highly-regarded Fanny Bay name, a 20,000 square foot state-of-the-art processing plant, 250 acres of prime growing area in Baynes Sound and a retail store next to the Denman Island ferry landing.