

In Brief

Seeking the best in local business

Delta's best and brightest businesses will be in the spotlight during the 2004 Hats Off to Excellence Awards.

And while the fifth annual edition of the awards are still a way off—Nov. 5 at the Delta Town and Country Inn—now is the time to nominate a deserving firm for their achievements.

Deadline for nominations is set for Oct. 1, and those suggesting a potential winner must complete a nomination form that includes a detailed, 500-word description of the business or individual to aid the panel of judges in their picks of Delta's finest.

The awards, presented by the Delta Chamber of Commerce, are divided into a number of categories and include two major headings: business awards and service awards.

Under the business awards category, recognition will be given to:

- entrepreneur of the year
- business of the year (over 10 employees)
- community business

In the service awards category, judges will present awards for:

- young service
- citizen of the year
- lifetime achievement

Nomination forms are available from the Delta Chamber of Commerce web site at:

www.deltachamber.com/nomination_form.php

For more information or tickets to the event call 604-946-4232.



Fish to fertilizer is the process Michael Renwick, a consultant with Bella Coola Fisheries, has been overseeing at the east Delta plant.

Photo: Philip Raphael

New trick for an old 'dog'

Local company transforms fish waste into valuable crop and garden fertilizer

Philip Raphael
SOUTH DELTA LEADER

Who said you can't teach an old Dogfish a new trick?

Certainly not those behind the production of a new, completely organic garden fertilizer that processes and bottles up the previously discarded remains of a long-used commercial catch species—the Pacific Spiny Dogfish Shark.

Previously only available to commercial growers, Pacific Natural organic liquid fertilizer, produced at Bella Coola Fisheries Ltd. in south east Delta, is being offered to backyard gardeners for the first time.

The move to the retail sector comes after five years of refining and testing the product which has added value to the Dogfish catch, of which only a portion was processed for human consumption.

Michael Renwick, a consultant working with Bella Coola Fisheries to develop and market the fertilizer, said the Dogfish catch is traditionally sold to markets in Japan, and Europe.

In the United Kingdom, local fish and chip shops call it rock salmon, while in France Dogfish is translated into the more palatable name "Saumonette."

Meanwhile at the Delta fish processing plant, Dogfish means,

hopefully, a return on a million dollar investment as fertilizer made from the leftover waste is transformed into sales.

Apart from the flesh, fins (used in shark fin soup), and cartilage taken from around the fish's head (which is processed as an arthritic relief supplement) the rest of the Dogfish was thrown away.

Now, the Delta company takes this part of the fish and cooks it at a low temperature at a specially-built plant in the Tilbury area. There it is turned into a liquid fertilizer the consistency of

"chocolate milk," Renwick said.

It's that process which makes the Pacific Natural product so effective since very little of the nutrients in the fish are "cooked out" by high temperatures, Renwick explained. The fact that a single species is used makes the fertilizer a uniform, consistent end product, something which has helped earn it the organic seal of approval.

The idea to use waste Dogfish sprang from a suggestion by a group of east coast fish processors five years ago who were con-

verting their catch into fertilizer. Renwick decided to try something similar here.

Once the processing plant was set up and turning out product, tests were done to judge the effectiveness of the fertilizer on commercial farms for row crops such as beans, peas, and corn.

The results were so positive that the next step was made to expand the product's availability. So, this year was the first time the public was able to visit their local garden centre and pick up a bottle.