

Seaweed farms on the menu

CLARE PEDDIE
SCIENCE REPORTER

SCIENTISTS want to develop a new industry alongside aquaculture, using seaweed to soak up excess nutrients from fish farms.

Researchers have spent \$1.1 million over three years to try local seaweed species next to tuna and yellowtail kingfish farms in the Spencer Gulf.

“There is potential to add substantially to our existing aquaculture industry,” said project leader Dr Jason Tanner, from the South Australian Research and Development Institute. “If it really works well, there’s potential for hundreds of hectares.”

Seaweed is used in Asian dishes and many processed

foods. Extracts are used as setting agents and bioactive substances for pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.

Dr Tanner described seaweed farming as a “win-win”, for aquaculture and the environment, because fish farms produce nutrient-rich waste that is food for seaweed.

Agriculture Food and Fisheries Minister Michael O’Brien said Australia imports almost \$20 million of seaweed every year, so it would make sense to grow our own.

“There is considerable potential for expansion, especially of ocean-based fish farming,” he said.



WIN-WIN: South Australian Research and Development Institute researcher Dr Jason Tanner at O’Sullivan Beach.

Taken from The Advertiser on Saturday, December 11, 2010. Story by Claire Peddie; Photo by Sara Reed.