Aquaculture Production Potential

The sunray venus clam *Macrocallista nimbosa* is a large, attractive, native clam distributed from South Carolina to Florida and the Gulf of Mexico states. During the 1960-70s, two million pounds of these clams were harvested in the Panhandle region of Florida. However, insufficient natural stocks of sunray venus clams, as well as the small size of the fishing grounds, limited the development of the fishery. This prior fishery, market and potential growth rate makes the sunray venus clam a logical choice as a new candidate species to expand and diversify the hard clam *Mercenaria mercenaria* aquaculture industry in Florida.

Over the past five years, research and extension faculty at the University of Florida and Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute at Florida Atlantic University, along with industry project partners, have developed, tested, and demonstrated technical methods to culture the sunray venus clam. The project team used culture methods standard to those employed by the Florida hard clam culture industry as a starting point. Accomplishments for each culture stage follow:

- **Hatchery** – Wild broodstock were collected from the west coast of Florida, conditioned, and spawned by thermal shock.

Sunray venus clams harvested after 12 months in the growout culture stage reach about 2” in shell length.

Also in this series:
- Consumer Acceptance of Cooked and Raw Clams
- Sensory Profile
- Shelf Life Assessment
- Nutritional Profile
This component of an integrated research and extension project evaluating the aquaculture and market potential of the sunray venus clam was conducted by Leslie Sturmer at the University of Florida, Cooperative Extension Service, and John Scarpa at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute at Florida Atlantic University, with funding from the Florida Sea Grant College Program.