

# Marine biotechnology expanding industry's horizons



## Science

What does seaweed have to do with an orange grove, or fish oils with infant brain development? For some of Atlantic Canada's hottest companies these unexplored avenues mean business!

Increasingly, Canada's scientists are teaming up with industry to create new and innovative products from sea creatures. One of them, Dartmouth-based Acadian Seaplants Limited (ASL), developed its *Ascophyllum* seaweed extract into a plant growth promoter that is exported to more than 35 countries. ASL recently increased its staff by over 25 and in 1996 won a Canada Export Award for Exporting Excellence.

ASL's President Louis Deveau says, "We couldn't have cracked these markets or won these awards without the help of NRC, especially Dr. Jim Craigie." Craigie's work at the National Research Council's Institute for Marine Biosciences (IMB) in Halifax helped ASL develop a formulation which delivers production benefits to orange farmers and other agriculture crops worldwide.

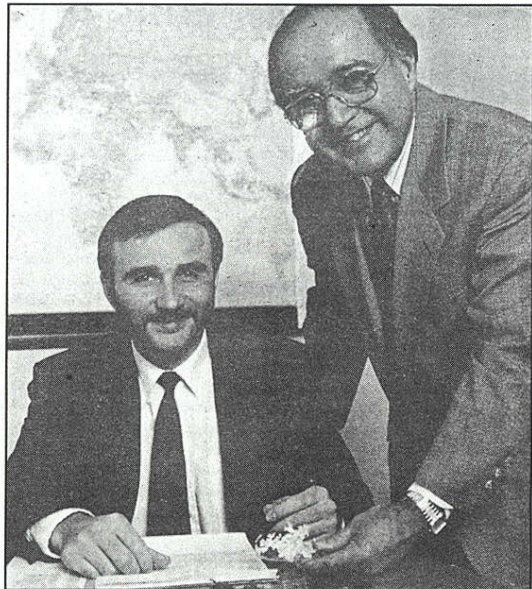
Elsewhere, John Risely, Atlantic Canada's 1997 Entrepreneur of the year, recently established Ocean Nutrition Canada (ONC) as a sub-

siary of his well known seafood company, Clearwater Fine Foods. ONC produces marine-based nutritional supplements, which, at this point, include various fish oils, in two product formats: micro-capsules used as additives in foods such as infant formulas; and gel caps for adults who seek the well-studied benefits of these oils in their diet. "This is a very exciting new area for Clearwater," explains John Risely. "We want to create products with proven benefits and we've identified opportunities which have a good fit with other parts of Clearwater's business." Dr. Jeff Wright, on secondment from IMB, has among other things established a project in IMB's Oxford Street lab to convert one of Clearwater's waste streams into a new product. "As success stories in marine biotechnology grow, other scientists and companies are getting involved, creating opportunities and employing people", Wright says.

The wave of high-tech products

Louis Deveau, right, and son J.P., display some of the seaweed that Acadian Seaplants harvests and processes. Deveau is president of the Brown Avenue company, and was recently named high technology Entrepreneur of the Year for the Atlantic region. Acadian Seaplants is one of a growing number of Atlantic-based companies that are finding new value-added ways of making a living from the region's largest renewable resource—the Atlantic Ocean.

emerging from Canada's marine bio-resources is building as scientists and entrepreneurs explore ideas and share the associated risks. IMB, with its long list of satisfied clients, world-class facilities, keen minds and flexible business arrangements, has established itself as a winning partner. □



# OPPORTUNITY

# 1998

A look ahead at business in Atlantic Canada