

Local



Staff photo by Brian Tate

Cynthia Kittler shows off one of the Tilapia fish, which are similar to perch, that she has been harvesting recently at the Aquaculture Center.

Native Israeli fish going public

Aggie pond harvesting starts

By ERICA KRENNERICH
Battalion Reporter
Fish harvests have begun in the Aggie fish pond. But that's not the Fish Pond by Sbis Dining Hall where Texas A&M freshmen cadets throw yell leaders after football victories.

The harvesting is taking place at the Aquaculture Research Center, known as the Aggie fish pond to those who work there. The center is located on Highway 60, about five miles west of the University, and is part of the Texas A&M Extension Service.

The fish, *Tilapia aurea*, native to Israel, are part of Cynthia Kittler's research for a doctorate in wildlife and fisheries.

Kittler said that with proper weather conditions, the fish will be harvested and sold this week for 80 cents a pound live weight. "Tilapia are a very tasty fish, not very bony," she said. "They have white, flaky meat that tends to have less trouble with an off-flavor than catfish."

Kittler said they would sell for about \$2 a pound commercially, and that only fish over one-half pound will be sold. The money from sales will go to cover the cost of raising next year's fish, she said.

Kittler expects to have about

1,500 pounds, or 3,000 fish, to sell. People who want to buy fish can contact her at the center or sign up for the number of pounds they want in the second-floor library of Nagle Hall.

People are needed to help harvest the fish and can sign up in Nagle Hall for the hours and days they can work. "We need a lot of people to help," she said. She has 12 ponds to harvest, and no more than two ponds can be harvested in a day.

Kittler, who is from Shreveport, La., stocked the fish ponds on July 1. She said the fish must be harvested before the weather gets too cold. They usually will die in water below 55 degrees.

Six ponds were stocked with only males and six with both males and females. Kittler said after tilapia hatch they can be given a male hormone for four weeks to ensure an all-male population.

She said she wanted to stock only males for her research but did not have enough for the 12 ponds. Ponds with males and females usually cause an increase in the volume of fish because of numerous offspring, but do not show large increases in fish size as in ponds with males only.

"The reason I am doing this re-

search is to show an economical means of producing these fish in Texas as a commercial product,"

she said. "What we're looking for is a saleable fish about five pounds in weight."

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Campus Names

Cloyce Coffman

The Texas Agriculture Extension Service, a branch of the Texas A&M University System, has named a new agronomist to work in the areas of corn and grain sorghum production.

Cloyce Coffman will be headquartered in the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences at Texas A&M. He is a member of the American Society of Agronomy, Soil Science Society of America, Crop Science Society of America and Soil Conservation Society of America.

Coffman holds a bachelor's degree in agricultural education and a master's degree in soils, both from the University of Missouri. He has completed most of the requirements for a doctoral degree in soil fertility from Iowa State University.

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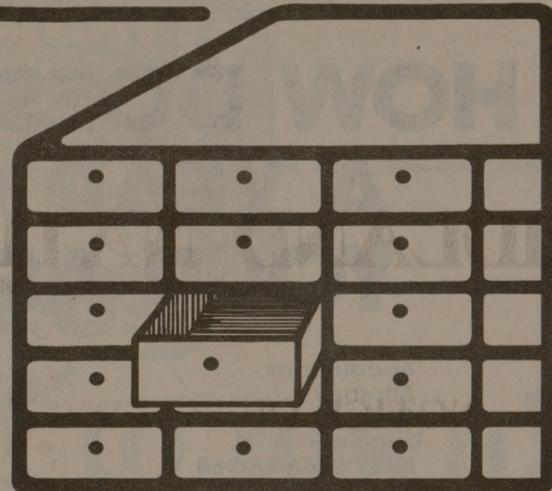
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