Italian plastic used in crawfish traps

By PAUL KEDINGER
Editor

Area crawfish farmers are in love with it,” reports Victor Fontenot about a new Italian all-plastic mesh a new Mamou business is busy using in the manufacture of crawfish traps.

In the last two months, sales of the new traps, produced by Mamou Wholesale Crawfish and Farm Supply, have steadily climbed, reports Fontenot, whose father Delan Fontenot owns the new business which operates in the former Mamou Wholesale Grocery building on Chestnut St.

“Four of us started making traps in November,” Fontenot says. Now, the firm employs approximately 15 workers to assemble on an average of 400 traps a day.

The basis for the enthusiasm exhibited by company officials rests with what Fontenot termed “a stroke of luck” in obtaining the sole distribution franchise for a new Italian plastic mesh. The Mamou firm holds distribution rights for the gulf coast area encompassing Texas to Georgia.

“We have no idea how long it will last,” says Fontenot about the new Italian product which does not disintegrate in saltwater, doesn’t become brittle in cold weather and is impervious to algae.

The current industry standard for traps is plastic coated galvanized wire, Fontenot notes, which farmers must replace on the average of 20 to 30 percent a year.

The Italian product also permits the Mamou firm to save crawfisherman approximately 25 percent on the cost of their traps. That can amount to important savings for farmers harvesting crawfish from thousands of acres of water using 400 to 500 traps, says Fontenot.

The Mamou manufacturers are also excited about the results of field research which indicates crawfish traps constructed from white, instead of black plastic, attract more crawfish. Although the firm has begun production of the plastic mesh traps, Fontenot says the firm continues to produce the familiar wire traps.

The firm hopes to ride the crest of ever increasing crawfish production. “The crawfish market is expanding throughout Louisiana and the world,” Fontenot explains that the industry may, within a few years, become a year-around industry. Researchers at LSU and USL, he says, are conducting experiments at year-around feeding and have trapped the mudbugs in water temperatures as high as 95 degrees.

In addition to producing traps for the crawfish farmers, the new Mamou Wholesale plans to construct crab traps. The firm also sacks, feed, bait and other related supplies.