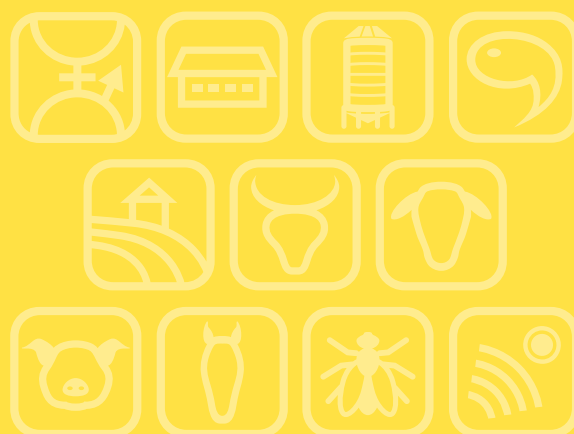


**Book of Abstracts of the 69<sup>th</sup>  
Annual Meeting of the European  
Federation of Animal Science**



**Book of abstracts No. 24 (2018)  
Dubrovnik, Croatia,  
27-31 August 2018**

**EAN: 9789086863235**  
**e-EAN: 9789086868711**  
**ISBN: 978-90-8686-323-5**  
**e-ISBN: 978-90-8686-871-1**  
**DOI: 10.3920/978-90-8686-871-1**

**ISSN 1382-6077**

**First published, 2018**

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**The Netherlands, 2018**



**Wageningen Academic**  
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Wageningen Academic Publishers  
P.O. Box 220  
6700 AE Wageningen  
The Netherlands  
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**Growth and mortality of oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*, Thunberg 1793) in Sacca degli Scardovari (Italy)**

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This study assessed growth and mortality of oysters reared in suspended ropes, and tested the effect of rope emersion time throughout fattening (8 months; October 2016-June 2017). A total of 4,320 triploid oysters were stuck to 36 ropes (320 oysters/rope) and subjected to three emersion systems (12 ropes/system): standard of the farm (F), i.e. variable emersion duration changing according to daily atmospheric conditions; long (L), i.e. 14 emersion hours per day; short (S), i.e. 7 emersion hours per day. Biometric traits were collected at sticking, and after 2, 4, and 8 months. Biometric data were analysed with PROC MIXED (SAS), with emersion system, sampling time and their interactions as fixed effects, and rope as random effect; mortality was analysed with PROC CATMOD. At sticking, oysters exhibited an average weight of 6.04±2.63 g, a length of 39.8±8.38 mm and a width of 23.9±4.39 mm. Oyster length and width were similar from 2 to 4 months (46.1 mm and 33.3 mm on average, respectively), and increased after 8 months (76.0 mm length and 59.6 mm width) ( $P<0.001$ ). After 8 months, oysters subjected to F and L emersion programs were heavier (68.3 g and 66.3 g vs 56.8 g;  $P<0.01$ ), longer (78.1 mm and 77.2 mm vs 71.6 mm;  $P<0.01$ ) and wider (55.6 mm and 55.0 vs 50.8 mm;  $P<0.10$ ) than those subjected to S emersion. Total mortality reached 44.3% in F, 63.3% in L, and 66.8% in S system ( $P<0.001$ ). To conclude, under the tested conditions, oysters fattening appeared feasible and promising, but the short fixed emersion system was the least favourable due to higher mortality and lower growth. Acknowledgements: La Perla del Delta; Veneto Region, Reg. (UE) 508 15/05/2014, DGR 213 28/02/2017.