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[00:00:00] **Speaker 1** So, I just kind of lay out the setup here. How long have you had the ponds here?

[00:00:06] **Speaker 2** So we've had, these ponds have been here since 1995, but we actually, they were all... Plastic-lined. They were clay-lined for until probably six years ago. So six years now we've had the plastic-line ponds.

[00:00:30] **Speaker 1** And how does that in fact success versus the old playline ones?

[00:00:34] **Speaker 2** It's made it a lot easier, for sure, on getting the final product, like getting the fish out. It drains a lot better and you lose way less fish. When we had just the clay ponds, you would lose a lot of fish in the clay when you're trying to drain them. So it's definitely improved our success rate.

[00:00:57] **Speaker 1** And how many, obviously these are eggs that we saw you harvest from Nelakagin, and then you hatched them here or over at N8DS.

[00:01:07] **Speaker 2** So we did nemocogin for NADF. So we collect eggs from nemocoggins for them. And then we were actually at Upper St. Croix Lake this year. So that's the walleye we have in our ponds. So we collected them at the lake, and then we brought them to our facility, and we hatched from there into tanks. And then from there, we brought him out to here.

[00:01:30] **Speaker 1** Okay, so these are destined for St. Croix.

[00:01:32] **Speaker 2** Yep, Upper St. Croix.

[00:01:33] **Speaker 1** Where they come from is where they go back

[00:01:35] **Speaker 2** Yep, that's what we try to do every year.

[00:01:39] **Speaker 1** How many eggs do you think versus how many fries versus what do you expect at the end?

[00:01:44] **Speaker 2** Yeah, so we, when we collect eggs, we try to get at least three liters, maybe four, and it's roughly 90,000 to 110,000 per liter. So from there, once they hatch, we stock each pond with roughly 80,000 fry at the time. And then by the end, we're looking at getting 15,000 total. So It's not a very good success rate, but it's better than what they would do in the lake. In the lake it's less than one percent and we're pushing, you know, we're doing better than that here.

[00:02:25] **Speaker 1** So what impacts how the walleye survives, obviously we're exposed to the elements here.

[00:02:31] **Speaker 2** So it's, we check on them every day, and then we make sure they're being fed, and we try to keep the predators away, mainly the birds, and then it's just, there's no other fish predators, like in the lake. There's no, yeah, big predators eating the fish. The only predators fish-wise is themselves.

[00:02:58] **Speaker 1** Does that come into play by the end of the season, some of the bigger ones?

[00:03:01] **Speaker 2** So it actually starts right away. While I am very cannibalistic, they'll eat each other. So that's why we're adding the fertilizer also to keep it turbid, keep the water darker so it keeps down the cannibalism.

[00:03:16] **Speaker 1** So you've got a couple of interns here. Walk me through how they came to be here and what they're doing.

[00:03:22] **Speaker 2** Yeah, I can do that. So they're from the Bayfield School. They applied. We usually get two to three interns from middle school to high school every year. And usually, so it's just for the summer since they're in school still. They get to help with all the natural resources. So I get them just once in a while. And we like to put them to work and do hands-on stuff. And then, I mean, they're only around for about eight weeks, usually, and we try to keep them busy.

[00:04:02] **Speaker 1** What's it like for you to be able to say all right? Here's what you gotta do get in there and just do it, right?

[00:04:06] **Speaker 2** Yeah, oh yeah. It's great. I mean I've put in my time doing it a lot and it's nice to see some kids here from Redcliffe actually interested in it and actually doing the work.

[00:04:22] **Speaker 1** And they've got a good attitude about it, right?

[00:04:24] **Speaker 2** Oh yeah, for sure. I mean, you find out real quick if you don't like it.

[00:04:30] **Speaker 1** And so what is it that they're spreading here and what's the purpose, how does that play into this?

[00:04:35] **Speaker 2** So what they're spreading is alfalfa meal. So the purpose of alfelfa meal is to get the bugs going in the water and also keep it turbid, like I said. And so the walleye eat the bugs. It's the easiest way to explain it.

[00:04:52] **Speaker 1** And this is that, so while I start out eating algae, are they always going for bugs or what's that food?

[00:04:58] **Speaker 2** Yeah, so they start out with algae too. While I will pretty much eat anything, they can get their mouths to fit on. We do get problems with toads, but the walleye aren't quite big enough yet to be able to eat the tadpoles, but they'll eat anything they can get their mulls on pretty much.

[00:05:21] **Speaker 1** And this does draw in enough bugs that they can...

[00:05:24] **Speaker 2** Yep, for sure. It's with the black clay lined or black plastic line, we get the water heated up pretty nice and it gives a nice bloom of

[00:05:36] **Speaker 1** and just what kind of bugs, like everything imaginable? Yeah.

[00:05:39] **Speaker 2** Yeah pretty much anything you see in a lake it's getting in here. We also get the whatever comes from the lake off the birds legs too. We'll also get it put in here and then the wind I mean hopefully they eat the wood ticks too I'm hoping.

[00:05:56] **Speaker 1** That would be nice, right? Yeah. So as far as the cycle for the walleye, are we about halfway or where are we in there?

[00:06:10] **Speaker 2** Yeah, so it's easiest to say we start in the end of April and we're done in the second week of October, so whatever that time frame is.

[00:06:23] **Speaker 1** Not quite six months. Yeah. Okay, so we're easily two months in. Yeah, maybe a third of the way.

[00:06:31] **Speaker 2** I'm about third of the way.

[00:06:34] **Speaker 1** All right, it looks like they need some.