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## After floods, mussel farmers reap a bumper harvest

SHGs garner 6.5 tonnes of mussels from five farming units

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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Mussel farmers at Moothakunnam near here, who were battered badly by the massive floods in August last year, are reaping a bumper harvest this season thanks to the initiative of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute. Five self-help groups (SHGs) in the region have harvested 6.5 tonnes of mussels from five farming units.

The farmers, most of whom are women, turned to bivalve farming as an additional livelihood option. They sustained severe loss in the floods which destroyed farming units.

The Molluscan Fisheries Division of CMFRI guided the farmers in their venture from January. After the harvest, mussels underwent



Women engaging in the harvest of mussels at Moothakunnam in Ernakulam. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

depuration, the process of expelling contaminants from the gills and guts using purified seawater.

Depurated mussel meat from the farms is available for sale at CMFRI. It can be

had from the Agriculture Technology Information Centre (ATIC) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on all working days till the stock lasts. Mussels are rich in protein, lipids, minerals, and vitamins.