Virtual Sea Grant Week, Dec. 9, 2020

Resources and Thoughts From the Breakout Rooms of: Sea Grant’s National Leadership on Aquaculture: How We Got Here, A Current Read and What Next

Workforce development resources

* 1. Lake Superior State University undergrad program: <http://webteam.lssu.edu/catalog/cmscatalog1920/aquaculture.php>
  2. University of Maine has a degree program that may have some tracking and Southern Maine Community College also has a program. Both might have numbers. Gayle Zydlewski would be someone to check with as a state contact.
  3. High school programs like Aquaculture in Action: <https://www.mdsg.umd.edu/topics/k-12-aquaculture-education/k-12-aquaculture-education>
  4. In Maine, much of the training is informal and takes advantage of the Limited Purpose Aquaculture lease program <https://www.maine.gov/dmr/aquaculture/forms/lpa.html> Employees can work with a successful company for a while and then get their own lease and try farming in up to 1,600 ft. This has led to growth and several spin-off companies in the oyster industry.
  5. In New York, the Cornell Cooperative Extension service offers the Suffolk Project in Aquaculture Training (SPAT) program to teach people who are interested in shellfish aquaculture how to culture them. Most current farmers in Long Island have gone through this program and have successful farms. <http://ccesuffolk.org/marine/aquaculture/spat-program>
  6. [Aquaculture in Shared Waters](https://seagrant.umaine.edu/extension/aquaculture-in-shared-waters/#:~:text=The%20Aquaculture%20in%20Shared%20Waters,with%20respect%20to%20this%20change.) was a response by Maine Sea Grant to make sure that new producers were not doing biologically or socially problematic practices. It’s an eight-week training course for any age level/ experience in aquaculture production. It is focused on shellfish mostly, but also touches on seaweed.
  7. Community college and associate degrees (cheaper, which might make it more attractive to students)
     1. <https://www.hccfl.edu/academics/subjects/environment/aquaculture>
     2. <https://www.cfk.edu/academics/academic-departments/marine-science/as-met/>
     3. <https://www.cobleskill.edu/academics/schools/agriculture-and-natural-resources/fisheries-wildlife/fisheries-and-aquaculture-bt.aspx>

Thoughts on workforce development

1. Look at long-term metrics — maybe survey industry to see where people are coming from/how they’re getting interested in the field as a way to assess workforce development.
2. Important to get to students in high school to make sure they have some sort of contact/awareness with the industry because they’re almost voting age and can help vote on policies related to aquaculture funding.
3. Another need that has been brought up, in Ohio and elsewhere, is a need for veterinarians with expertise in aquatic species. How are program’s addressing this? (IL-IN Sea Grant funded a project a while back but it was a one-off, pretty small effort <https://iiseagrant.org/research-project/increasing-the-availability-of-veterinarians-for-indiana-and-illinois-aquaculturists/>

Aquatic animal health extension in FL: <https://tal.ifas.ufl.edu/extension-and-outreach/aquatic-animal-health-extension/>

Resources and thoughts on marketing and resilience in the industry

1. Develop a consumer base so that the market isn’t saturated with producers and not enough people buying the products.
2. Conduct joint marketing - market broadly; building regional brands and state brands.
3. There is a tool from Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant <http://masgc.org/assets/uploads/publications/1141/fisheries_resilience_index.pdf>
4. Need to connect farmers with each other. Stress a business plan. Train the trainers.
5. Great Lakes have the Great Lakes Aquaculture Regional Collaborative. <https://greatlakesseagrant.com/aquaculture/>
6. Consumers are concerned about purchasing seafood in large nonrecyclable Styrofoam packaging. Is this an area that Sea Grant could address? Sustainable packaging. [Teri King](https://wsg.washington.edu/about-wsg/staff-dir/teri-l-king/) with Washington Sea Grant has some resources on this topic.
7. Marketing ideas:

* <https://www.flseagrant.org/seafood/seafoodatyourfingertips/>
* <https://eatwisconsinfish.org/>
* Recipes cards and videos
* Fact sheets
* Maryland Shuck at Home <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLieA6Ru6uFitJeg_4ZqcF-hSE-WxOZbq8>
* <https://hamahamaoysters.com/collections/operation-farmgate>
* <https://buy.taylorshellfishfarms.com>
* <https://bellinghamseafeast.org>

Support for the industry workforce and loans

1. Peer-to-Peer support <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Portals/0/Documents/Peer%20Listener%20Training%20Manual.pdf>
2. In Maryland, <https://extension.umd.edu/aquaculture/grants-and-loans>
3. USDA loans through the Value Added Producer Grant program