Alaska Mariculture Initiative

July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2016

**Vision: Grow a $1 billion industry in 30 years!**
Alaska’s mariculture industry (enhancement, farming, and restoration of shellfish and aquatic plants) could grow to $1 billion in thirty years. Is this attainable? Absolutely – with a coordinated effort, public-private partnerships, and a strategic plan designed to reach this goal. The ex-vessel value of Alaska seafood in 2012 was approximately $2 billion, of that the salmon hatcheries contribute roughly $100-300 million, depending upon the year. Examples of other geographic regions with smaller shorelines yet significant annual aquaculture production are British Columbia ($33 M), Washington ($110 M), New Zealand ($400 M), Norway ($5 B), and China ($54 B).

**Problem = Unrealized Potential**
Alaska has many strengths related to its marine environment: pristine waters, over 38,000 miles of shoreline, over 50% of the seafood production of the U.S., leadership in sustainability principles. However, since the passage of Alaska’s Aquatic Farm Act was in 1988, growth in mariculture has been mostly stagnant (see graph).

**Solution = Alaska Mariculture Initiative**
The Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) is spearheading the Alaska Mariculture Initiative to expedite the development of the mariculture industry. The Initiative was funded by a grant from NOAA. As a part of the Initiative, AFDF will: 1) expand the stakeholder base and develop the partnerships necessary for the foundation of a solid plan and its implementation; 2) conduct a three-phase economic analysis of successful mariculture industries in other regions and how they relate to Alaska; 3) complete a strategic planning process inclusive of a broad spectrum of stakeholders and agencies (including coastal communities, industry, the State of Alaska, NOAA, and interested conservation groups).

**Anticipated Benefits/Outcomes:** The Alaska Mariculture Initiative will expedite mariculture development in Alaska through the creation of partnerships, a strategic plan and a mechanism to implement the plan, launching Alaska down the path to the creation of a new billion dollar industry based on a renewable resource with numerous economic benefits for communities.

**Integration with Existing Policies:** The Alaska Mariculture Initiative will also integrate with the following policies and priorities which have recently been adopted:
- **National Shellfish Initiative** launched by NOAA Fisheries’ Office of Aquaculture in 2011 aimed at increasing the populations of bivalve shellfish through commercial production and restoration;
- **USDA Investment Strategy in Support of Rural Communities in Southeast Alaska 2011-2013** which identifies mariculture development as worthy of further USDA investment;
- **Alaska Mariculture Development Prospectus** (draft) published in June 2013 by the Alaska Department of Commerce as a means to generate discussion and ideas among mariculture stakeholders with the goal of creating a unified approach to move the industry forward
Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation

Target Partners

Challenges

- Remote areas - extremely remote sites which increase costs & logistics
- Infrastructure investment - seed production, growth techniques, product development require initial investment
- Organizational capacity - new & emerging industry lacks capacity & coordination to address challenges
- Workforce - lack of workforce requires recruitment, training, development
- Regulatory hurdles - perceived competing uses for sites & perceived environmental issues
- Environmental issues - sea otter predation & ocean acidification

AFDF Background: Since 1978, AFDF has helped turn challenges into opportunities for Alaska’s seafood industry by focusing on areas of research & development and by balancing economic benefits with sustainability principles. Successes include development of surimi in Alaska, fish oil research & development, encouraged development of over 400 value-added seafood products (including whitefish burgers, salmon bacon, salmon babyfood, salmon jerky), and promoted winning value-added products.

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