
OREGON SHELLFISH AND INLAND AQUACULTURE ADVISORY GROUP

June 14, 2015

Ms Katy Coba, Director
Oregon Department of Agriculture
635 Capital St., NE
Salem, OR 97302-2532

Subject: Future of the aqua farming program in Oregon

Dear Director Coba,

Last month, the Oregon Shellfish and Inland Aquaculture Advisory Group (OSIAA) met to discuss a series of recommendations coming from a recent assessment of the Oregon aqua farming program. The Group's conclusions, recommendations and proposed actions are attached for your consideration.

The meeting consisted of enthusiastic and thoughtful discussion from the 20 individuals present and joining by phone; a gathering that has become progressively more diverse and motivated by the opportunities for aqua farming in the State. However, the Group is concerned about what one member called "*regime uncertainty*." In spite of global and national trends, aqua farming in Oregon is still largely under the radar.


Through the course of the past two years, the Group has made considerable progress in developing a solid platform upon which to build a sustainable program. For the first time, concerned local, state and federal agencies are coming together to discuss aqua farming. New investors are contacting the Group. There are growing expectations that aqua farming can achieve a critical mass whereby it makes meaningful contributions to the State's economy.

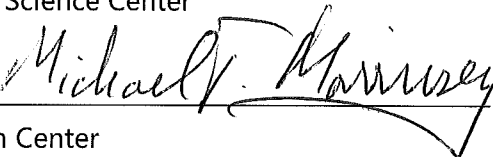
Much of the recent progress to promote positive change and increase investment can be attributed to the tireless efforts of Mr Jerry Gardner of the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA). We would like to commend ODA in its efforts to provide leadership for this growing sector. With Mr Gardner's retirement next month and the somewhat nebulous standing of the aqua farming program, the Group has strongly expressed its

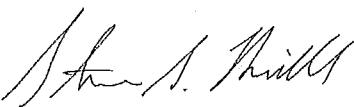
hopes that the existing momentum can be maintained. With this in mind we would ask that Mr. Gardner's replacement include responsibilities of chairing the OSIAA and continue the leadership role that Jerry has provided over the years.

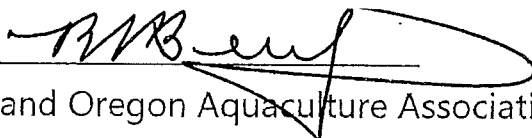
We therefore ask you to review our recommendations, evaluate our concerns and help us find a formula for significantly increasing aqua farming in Oregon.

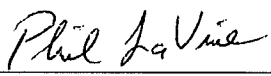
Sincerely yours, on behalf of the Group,

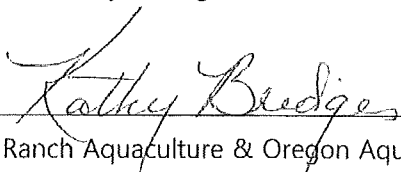
Gil Sylvia 
OSU, Hatfield Marine Science Center

Michael Morrissey 
OSU, Food Innovation Center

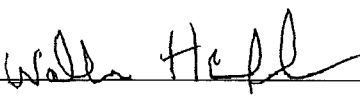
Steve Rumrill 
Shellfish Program Leader, ODF&W

Clint Bentz and Randy Bentz 
Blue Den Ranch Trout Hatchery and Oregon Aquaculture Association

Phil LaVine 
Chemeketa Community College

Kathy Bridges 
Santiam Valley Ranch Aquaculture & Oregon Aquaculture Association

Dan Driscoll ***Dan Driscoll***
Prairie Springs Fish Farm

William Hanshumaker 
Oregon Sea Grant

Group Recommendations for the Oregon Aqua Farming Program

The Group is asked to critically review the document *Developing Additional Investment in Aqua Farming in Oregon: a roadmap for sustainable development*. In regard to the conclusions and recommendations of this document, the Group is asked to:

A. **Endorse**, with adjustments as appropriate, the conclusions that:

1. sustainable aqua-farming is a responsible agricultural practice for Oregon;
2. the Oregon aqua farming program must expand and diversify to ensure greater economic, social and nutritional benefits;
3. a higher level of collaboration among all stakeholders is needed to achieve the aim of an expanded and diversified program;
4. state aqua farming plan [including one-stop-shop and strengthened producer associations] is necessary; and,
5. more human and financial resources are required from both the public and private sectors.

B. In line with the above conclusions, **recommend** that:

1. ODA should be the lead agency in this program that encompasses a variety of other state and federal agencies as well as the general public;
2. the Oregon Shellfish and Inland Aquaculture Advisory Group (OSIAAG) should guide the expansion and diversification of the program;
3. the core of the Oregon aqua farming program should be producing foods for local consumption as well as export;
4. efforts should be taken to educate people as to the realities of aqua farming as well as how to undertake the practice in a bankable and responsible way; and,
5. action should be taken immediately [see below].

C. Propose and **prioritize** actions for the immediate- and short-term:

1. Nominate some one as the focal point for aqua farming;
2. Institute pre-application conferences for aqua farms;
3. Secure means to undertake the elaboration of a state aqua farming plan;
4. Identify ways and means to increase investment in aqua-farming;
5. Establish pathway for increased OSIAAG action including the support to sub-groups on inland, marine/shellfish and aquatic plant/algal farming as well as regulatory and monitoring mechanisms [i.e., four sub-groups];
6. Design and implement a set of activities to educate Oregonians about aqua farming, addressing both pros and cons in a science-based and objective way;
7. Design and implement a curriculum to train aqua farmers and would-be aqua farmers in market and business planning;
8. Prepare and circulate a quarterly aqua farming newsletter;
9. Undertake a comprehensive assessments of the market, resource base and regulatory environment; and;
10. Put in place mechanisms to ensure more accurate and comprehensive statistics for the program.