

## **Shellfish & Inland Aquaculture Advisory Group**

**May 15, 2015 | 1pm to 3pm**  
**Oregon Department of Agriculture**  
**635 Capitol St. NE**  
**Salem, Oregon**

### *MEETING NOTES*

#### PARTICIPANTS:

**State Agency Participants:** Steve Rumrill – ODF&W; Alex Manderson - ODA-Food Safety; Jerry Gardner - ODA-Ag Development & Certification Program; Mark Freeman - OBD (Ports).

**Participants:** Gil Silvia, OSU HMSC; Randy Bentz, Blue Den Ranch; John Moehl, ODA consultant; Kessina Lee, Oregon Sea Grant Fellow; Joe Rohleder, Desert Springs Trout Farm; Bill Hunshumaker, OSU/HMSC; Michael Morrissey, OSU/FIC; Chuck Toombs, OSU Business School; Chris Spalding, Oregon Coast CC; Jon Silverman, Pacific Seafood; Michael Taylor and Kate Wildrick, Ingenuity Innovations (aquaponics); Paul Saint Hilaire, abalone farmer.

**By phone:** Margaret Barrette, Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association (PCSGA); Laura Hoberecht, NOAA Marine Fisheries; DLCD – Patty Snow; Tracy Liskey, Fish Farmer/Board of Agriculture; Megan Mackey, Ecotrust.

1. Gardner briefed the group regarding his impending retirement (June 30, 2015). The group expressed a desire to continue efforts to increase the level of investment in aquaculture in Oregon. Members called for a plan to keep the group together post Gardner's retirement. There is a need to appoint a "team leader" for each of the four sub-groups.

2. The Group was 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 was asked to:

#### **A. Endorse:**

- aqua farming is a responsible agricultural practice for Oregon;
- the Oregon aqua farming program must expand to ensure greater economic, social and nutritional benefits;
- a high level of collaboration among all stakeholders is needed to achieve the aim of an expanded program;

- a state aqua farming plan [including one-stop-shop and strengthened producer associations] is necessary; and,
- more human and financial resources are required from both the public and private sectors.

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

- ODA should be the lead agency in this program that encompasses a variety of other state and federal agencies as well as civil society; the Oregon Shellfish and Inland Aquaculture Advisory Group (OSIAAG) should guide the expansion of the program;
- the core of the Oregon aqua farming program should be producing foods for local consumption as well as export; and 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;
- Action [see below] should be taken immediately and **prioritize** actions for the immediate- and short-term:
  - Nominate some one as the focal point for aqua farming;
  - Institute pre-application conferences for aqua farms;
  - Secure means to undertake the elaboration of a state aqua farming plan;
  - Identify ways and means to increase investment in aqua farming across the state;
  - 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];
  - 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;
  - Design and implement a curriculum to train aqua farmers and would-be aqua farmers in market and business planning;
  - Prepare and circulate a quarterly aqua farming newsletter;
  - Undertake a comprehensive assessments of the market, resource base and regulatory environment;
  - Put in place mechanisms to ensure more accurate and comprehensive statistics for the program.

3. Kessina Lee gave an update on HB2209 the "Shellfish Initiative". The bill was passed unanimously out of committee and is now at Ways and Means waiting on a funding decision

that may not happen until the end of the session. If the bill passes, a taskforce will be formed to consider shellfish and make recommendations to the short session of the legislature. The bill seeks funds for the ODA and OSU. The bill also calls for an inventory of coastal land that can be used to expand aqua farming. Funding for an extension position at OSU was removed from the bill, however, OSU's Sea Grant Program has applied for a NOAA grant to fund this position.

4. Michael Morrissey and Chuck Toombs undated the group regarding the "dulse project." OSU has received a \$68,500 grant from the ODA's Specialty Crop Program to develop and take to market a seaweed product produced at the HMSC. Product development and consumer sensory work will be done at the Food Innovation Center in Portland while OSU's Business School will draft a business plan. Packaged dulse sells for as much as \$62 / lb. in some areas and OSU plans to present this opportunity to the Coquille Economic Development organization. Algae products are an important aspect of aqua farming.

5. Randy Bentz updated the group regarding development in inland aquaculture. Randy mentioned "regime uncertainty" as a limiting factor in inland aqua farming. It is unclear, to many investors, how specific business projects will be handled by regulators. This is true from egg to market. The process seems to depend on "who you know." Surface water rights are also an issue. It is difficult to get a permit to stock fish in ponds. Randy called for investments in processing capacity to stimulate the demand for edible inland-farmed fish. Improvements in non-fish meal diets are expected to improve the public image of farmed fish. The inland fish industry needs to grow beyond the recreational fish stage although this is an important segment for some producers. ODF&W is reducing their budget for purchasing privately raised fish to stock waterways for recreational fishing. Last year's budget was about \$400,000.

6. Several new participants provided updates.

a. Paul Saint Hilaire – Paul is a native American who is affiliated with an existing abalone company currently located in California. Paul plans to establish a significant aquaculture business in Florence, Oregon with facilities in Clackamas County. Paul mentioned that he benefitted from the User Guide produced by John Moehl. Paul expressed an interest in helping to produce a quarterly aquaculture newsletter.

b. Kate Wildrick and Michael Taylor attended representing Ingenuity Innovations. They are interested in the social aspects of aquaponics and have developed relationships with a number of organizations that hope to educate and involve socially disadvantaged segments of the population in aquaponics.

7. Gil Silvia updated the group on OSU's Marine Studies Initiative. The initiative calls for a \$200 million investment over the next 10 years at the HMSC in Newport. 500 undergraduate students will receive training in marine sciences. Aquaculture will be part of the offerings. A new \$60 million building is planned and with up to 25 new instructors. Students will benefit from internships designed to assist the industry. Gil has applied for a \$3 million grant to get things started.

8. Chris Spalding attended and indicated that the Oregon Coast Community College is eager to support aquaculture. Current educational offering center around ornamental fish but aquaponics is also of interest.

9. Bill Hunshumaker indicated that his organization is planning to survey oyster farmers regarding the impact of regulations on business activities.

10. Participants were asked to comment or question the report prepared by John Moehl, "Developing Additional Investment in Aqua Farming in Oregon." Participants indicated that they approve of the document. There were no comments or questions.

11. Action items:

The following individuals volunteered to lead the sub-groups listed.

Shellfish – Kessina Lee

Algae – Michael Morrissey

Inland – Randy Bentz

State Agencies – Jerry Gardner

Members will prepare a letter to Katy Coba asking the ODA to continue their lead role in the Advisory Group. "Lead role" is defined as facilitating the organizations efforts.

2:45 pm - Adjourn