

# **Aquaculture Advisory Committee**

**Thursday, October 23, 2014**

**1pm to 3pm**

**Oregon Department of Agriculture**

**635 Capitol St. NE**

**Salem, Oregon**

## **Meeting Notes**

**Participants:** Martin Zone, USDA Rural Development; Lauren Henderson, Asst. Director ODA; Ron Milton, Talipia producer; Phil LaVine, Chemeketa CC; Andy Rivinus, retired consultant; Steve Rumrill & Scott Patterson, ODF&W; Gil Silvia, OSU Hatfield Marine Science Center; Randy Bentz & Clint Bentz, Blue Den Ranch; Kathy Bridges, Ore Aquaculture Association; John Moehl, consultant; Jerry Gardner, ODA.

**By phone:** Jon Steinman, Pacific Seafood; Margaret Barrette, Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association (PCSGA); Dan Driscoll, Prairie Springs Fish Farm; Louis Hans, Columbia Catfish & Bass; Laura Hoberecht, NOAA Marine Fisheries; Mary Camarata, DEQ.

1. Lauren Henderson discussed the ODA's interest in supporting aquaculture from a regulatory and business development point of view. Lauren will allocate some of his time to this end and the Department will continue to staff this work to the best of their ability. Katy Coba, Director of Agriculture, is pleased that the members of the Aquaculture Advisory Committee are giving their time to work on developing a plan for aquaculture. Lauren mentioned that the ODA has discussed this initiative with Gabriele Goldfarb, Governor Kitzhaber's Natural Resource Policy Advisor, and she is also supportive of efforts to collect data and develop a plan for the sustainable production of various aquatic species in Oregon.

2. John Moehl discussed his progress with the paper he is working on that will outline the permitting process required to obtain both marine and fresh water permits in Oregon (see a tentative schematic attached). John mentioned that he also plans to use up to four case studies that will demonstrate the challenges and requirements necessary to produce aquatic products. Under consideration is an aquaponics case study along with marine and fresh water case studies. John will work with entrepreneurs, regulators, and educational institutions to draft these case studies. All this will result in a User Guide that will help perspective aquaculture entrepreneurs get into and/or expand their aquaculture operations. An outline of John's activities is attached.

3. Laura Hoberecht gave a summary of NOAA's national initiative in support of expanding marine aquaculture. NOAA has a great website that provides all the details. SEE: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/aquaculture/funding/nmai.html>

Laura is working closely with Margeret Barrette on a shellfish initiative. Laura is interested in supporting Oregon's activities, where possible, with respect to marine aquaculture.

4. Margaret Barrette discussed her organization's efforts to assist shellfish producers in Washington and California. Washington now has a program supporting shellfish production. California is working on an initiative to do the same. Margaret is working with members of the Oregon Coastal Caucus to develop a set of legislative solutions to some of the issues facing Oregon shellfish producers. The Coastal Caucus has drafted a "place holder bill" (LC481) that will address some of the issues. Under consideration is the formation of a shellfish task force, support for OSU's marine program, and support for ODA's regulatory programs. Other issues are also being discussed.

Steve Rumrill indicated that water quality, food safety, product quality, and land use issues are also important to any legislative proposal.

Margaret indicated that the PCSGA is willing to cooperate with others interested in advancing aquaculture in Oregon. Margaret suggested that the marine and fresh water elements of the Aquaculture Advisory Committee may want to draft a set of discussion points regarding their commonly held interests so the industry is "singing off the same sheet of music." There was general agreement on this point.

5. Gil Silvia briefly outlined OSU's intentions to allocate millions of dollars to expand the fishery programs at the Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport. The University is planning to hire 25-30 more staff and spend up to \$50 million on new facilities. Gil reminded everyone that there used to be six professors at the center who dealt with aquaculture. They are now down to one. Gil suggested that now is a good time to stress the important of expanding aquaculture in the State. Gil indicated that OSU's programs could include both marine and fresh water offerings.

6. Phil LaVine gave a brief overview of Chemeketa Community College's Farm Management Program. Phil regularly counsels farmers about the business management functions associated with operating an agricultural business. Chemeketa is prepared to provide this service, for a fee, to individuals interested in aquaculture.

7. The group discussed the term “aquaculture.” Some suggest that this term carries a significant amount of negative baggage that detracts from the real value and reality of fish farming. Is there another term that might be used that does not conjure up so much negativity? How can fish farmers brand their efforts, if not their industry, to be more consumer friendly and acceptable. Members of the group expressed different views on this subject. For some, aquaculture is what it is and the public needs to be better educated on the subject. There may not be a need to re-brand the industry.

8. Clint Bentz suggested that only recirculation aquaculture operations may prove to be viable in Oregon. It is difficult to operate a surface water operation. In-land permitting processes seem to be muddled and lacking clear regulatory guidelines and processes. There are few fresh water fish produced for human consumption in Oregon. Rather, in-land producers raise fin-fish for the sport fishing industry.

#### 9. Next steps

- John Moehl will continue to visit with stakeholders to complete the paper as outlined in the attached activity schedule.
- Advisory Committee members will work with Margaret Barrette to develop a set of common interests. Discussions will continue around combining marine and fresh water efforts to develop legislation that may help both sectors of Oregon’s farmed fish economy.