Sea Grant Seaweed Hub:  
Market Opportunities Work Group  
10/29/20, 3-4PM EST
What is the Seaweed Hub?

• A science based, non-advocacy resource for the domestic seaweed aquaculture industry
• A collaborative framework to share information, identify needs, address challenges, and find opportunities in the emerging seaweed industry
• 3 year project funded in 2019 by the National Sea Grant Program’s Strategic Aquaculture Initiative
Who is involved in the Seaweed Hub?

Sea Grant Extension
East Coast: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York
West Coast: Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California

Steering Committee
National Sea Grant Office, State Sea Grant Programs, NOAA Fisheries, FDA Seafood Processing & Technology Policy Branch, USDA ARS National Program for Aquaculture, University of CT Extension

Diverse Stakeholders
Seaweed farmers, processors, businesses, researchers, culinary professionals, regulatory authorities, etc.
How will the Seaweed Hub work with Stakeholders?

**SURVEY**
- Formal needs assessment survey to inform the Seaweed Hub process
- Open January – March 2020
- 259 respondents
- Preliminary results available on the Seaweed Hub website

**SYMPOSIUM**
- Held in Providence, RI in early March 2020
- 120 stakeholders including farmers, processors, researchers, state/federal agencies, etc.
- Presentations about the status of seaweed aquaculture in the US and sharing opportunities for stakeholders

**WORK GROUPS**
- 4 work groups: Market Opportunities, Regulations, Post-Harvest Opportunities, and Production Systems
- Work groups will host virtual meetings in Years 2-3 of the project
- Funding is available to the work groups
Work Groups: Next Steps

**Virtual Meetings**
Work groups will meet virtually for years 2-3

**Connect and Collaborate**
Continue to identify opportunities and be responsive to emerging challenges (ex. Covid-19)

**Develop a Work Plan**
Identify priorities and actionable steps – develop a work plan that outlines this process

**Applied Project Funds**
Access to Applied Project Funds to fund projects that meet the goals of the Seaweed Hub
What are Applied Project Funds?

• Applied project funds are non-competitive funds meant to assist Work Groups in implementing their work plan
• $10,000 available to each work group
• Applied projects must meet the goals and priorities of the Seaweed Hub
• Small-scale/pilot projects that can be completed in a short timeframe (2 years)
1. Work groups collaboratively develop a project idea (or ideas) and a plan of work.

2. Work groups submit the plan of work to the Seaweed Hub Steering Committee for approval.

3. Applied project funds are made available to the work group through the UConn (Seaweed Hub PI).

4. Applied project funds used to fund work group project in years 2-3.
Market Opportunities Work Group: Symposium Recap

• Day 1 Objective: Generate Ideas – Identify “Big Picture” Challenges and Opportunities

• Discussion:
  • What markets currently exist?
  • Relation of scale and volume to market opportunities
  • “Niche markets” and “commodity markets”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tapping into new markets</td>
<td>• Consumer education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Distinguish “niche”</td>
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<td>• Diversify into multiple product lines</td>
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<td>Access to infrastructure/processing</td>
<td>• Partner with other local products for distribution</td>
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<td>• Co-op/collective opportunities for processing</td>
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<td>Consumer interest may be short-term</td>
<td>• Develop value-added products that are already familiar to consumers</td>
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<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need to know/understand markets before producing at scale</td>
<td>• Consumer validation, focus groups – life cycle analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mismatch between “large scale” seaweed operations and &quot;small commodity&quot; markets</td>
<td>• Identify points of entry so multiple growers can access</td>
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<td>• Co-ops to meet demand</td>
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<td>• Scale operations to meet supply needs</td>
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<td>No supply chain standards/grading exist – large buyers need consistency/quality</td>
<td>• Develop protocols for handling, establish quality grade(s) in the marketplace</td>
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<td>Challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public is not familiar with seaweed</td>
<td>• Consumer education</td>
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<td>• Develop consumer friendly products</td>
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<td>• Marketing campaign like other food products</td>
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<td>Competition with other products (ex. specialty vegetables, imported seaweed, etc.)</td>
<td>• Unified messaging to distinguish US seaweed in the market</td>
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<td>• Use nutritional profiles to form the basis of product stories</td>
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<td>Seaweed contents/nutrition are not accurately reflected in labeling – nutritional profiles are costly</td>
<td>• Open source consumer information/database – nutritional profiles that are regional, seasonal, etc.</td>
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<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Opportunities</td>
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<td>Seasonal production</td>
<td>• Value added processing or storage</td>
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<td>• Diversify species to extend season</td>
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<td>• Multiple harvests</td>
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<td>• Markets that extend season (ex. carbon markets)</td>
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<td>Different markets for different</td>
<td>• Identify end user preferences and target production of</td>
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<tr>
<td>species</td>
<td>desired species</td>
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*Shared Challenges*
Market Opportunities Work Group: Symposium Recap

• Day 2 Objective: Narrow Ideas – identify priorities and timeframes

• Discussion:
  • Messaging and market needs
  • Restoration and ecosystem services
  • Trade group
  • Consumer education
Identified Work Group Priorities

Short Term (0-1 Years)
- Trade Association
- Standards and Grading
- Regional Outreach Strategies

Medium Term (1-3 Years)
- Marketing Ecosystem Services
- Regional Outreach Strategies
- Trade Association

Long Term (3+ Years)
- Marketing Ecosystem Services
- Trade Association
- Recognition/support from federal agencies
Next Steps:

Today
• Introductions and re-introductions
• How do you define market opportunities/development?
• How does this group want to work together?

Next Meeting
• Do these priorities still make sense? Do we need to change or modify?
• Identify actionable items and begin to develop a work plan
“Market Opportunities”  “Market Development”