

Seaweed Hub Virtual Workshop
Post Harvest and Processing Workgroup
 April 29, 2021
 2:00 – 3:00 pm EST (11:00 am – 12:30 pm PST)

Agenda

2:00 pm	Welcome and Introductions	Use Zoom chat to introduce participants and create meeting registry
2:10 pm	Recap and Miro Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recap process used to build consensus ● Remind participants about basics Miro whiteboard navigation
2:20 pm	Priority 1: <i>Invest in feasibility study to recommend framework to establish Regional Processing Model that may be adapted by states</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Breakout group discussion with access to Miro whiteboard ● Request volunteer in each breakout group to capture consensus and other major issues on Miro whiteboard
3:05 pm	Gallery Walk	Review whiteboard comments and invite participants to elaborate
3:20 pm	Next Steps and Seaweed Hub website updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review plans for next meeting ● Highlight Seaweed Hub website updates
3:30 pm	Conclusion	

Whiteboard Notes: **Seaweed RPM SWOT**

Strengths: What must be done well to achieve the objective?

What is our advantage?

- Collaboration and shared resources
- Help encourage people to advance the industry
- Vertical integration: tank culture, nursery, processing; the one stop shop

- Cost sharing, less of a financial burden on individuals
- Utilize existing infrastructure that is not being used
- Coastal communities have existing infrastructure (ex. Alaska, Maine, etc.)
- Research in food hubs in other raw ag, leeks
- Food Venture Center or other centers can provide research
- Work has started on document on seaweed regulations – policies, National Sea Grant group, NY specific local group
- Fighting algae blooms, livestock feedstock feed, other positives; consider end use of seaweed to help drive processing facilities; list application and types that can be grown locally, volume that is needed to be processed
- Infrastructure and expertise of existing fishing communities

What resources do we have?

- Optimal growing conditions
- Already have processors making products – WA
- Smaller growers can sell to processor or utilize facility
- Marine research institutions

What markets or products do well?

- Lots of value added products and consumer packaged goods
- Locally fresh kelp can be successful/earn high prices, but is lower volume for food use

Use this space to add new questions.

- What products do well?

Weakness: What is harmful to achieve our objectives?

Where can we improve?

- No regional governance structure
- Getting word out that kelp is a viable research topic
- Streamline permitting
- Seasonality
- Processing facilities may not have seasonal capacity
- Seaweed is very wet and therefore unique challenges
- Market access – many small individuals difficult to obtain market access
- Safe storage

Where are we lacking resources?

- Volume may not be enough to tap into established processing opportunities
- Site map

- Distance to transport
- Different state considerations/regulations (if regions encompass multiple states)
- Information about at what point does volume justify changes to existing processing (ex. outfitting vegetable processing)
- Investment in processing facilities
- Lots of funding/efforts to “getting farms in the water” (training programs, grants, etc.); less funding/efforts to innovative processing/processing-focused research, etc.

What markets are underperforming?

- What consumer trends threaten business
- Lack of processing facilities makes raw kelp the only market
- Need more research on multi-trophic aquaculture
- Need seed banks

Opportunities: What are our goals for growth or success?

What technologies can be used to improve operations?

- Tank culture
- Improved filtration
- What are processing facility roles in marketing and sales?
- Renewable energy
- Market access – many small individuals difficult to obtain market access
- Understand demands of market or farmers needs; providing for the needs of the farmer
- Connecting the dots among communities – both infrastructure and regulatory
- Seasonality
- Opportunity to explore new models
- New model to raise crops
- What is the publicly available information about kelp processing?
- Basic scientific knowledge might also allow farmers to stabilize product themselves.

How can we expand core operations?

- Knowledge sharing of processing techniques among processors
- Tender boats in Alaska do processing/have freezing capacity on boats
- Training for processing (lots of training for farming, but none yet); expertise might not exist yet, and those that are processing could see it competitively
- What equipment/boats do we need to support larger harvests to meet demand (infrastructure to go from the farm to the dock)?

What new market segments can we explore?

- Pharmaceuticals, fertilizer, bioplastics, biofuels

- Positive regional messages
- Positive (or no) environmental impacts
- Biofuels

Use this space to add new questions.

- Mobile processing units? (Maine is working on a mobile drying unit but this is logistically very challenging; drying is relatively low-cost in greenhouses)
- What market segments can we explore? Bioplastics?
- Can we have a processing facility that is processing for multiple product types (raw bioplastics, value-added, etc.)?

Threats: What are the obstacles?

What new or existing regulations threaten operations?

- No standards
- If regulations change, only one facility would need to adapt
- Shared use concerns can be a challenge for farms/species (ex. farms need to be out by a certain time)
- Lack of clarity in permitting process
- Wet product in transportation has limited lifespan – needs to be processed close to farms
- Some states/regions may not be able to produce high volumes needed to meet alternative processing

Who are our competitors and what do they do well?

- Asia – already into genetic selection
- Need to streamline process and use vertical integration
- Other countries may not have as strict of regulations
- Large farms that can meet processing demands might be red flags in certain regions (ex. large leases in Maine bumping up against lobster industry)

What consumer trends threaten business?

- Social licensing
- Nutritional issues – iodine
- Heavy metal concentrations
- Large amount of global seaweed, no testing on global supply chains; can local producers capture this untested market?
- General mistrust in aquaculture

Parking Lot

Important issues that are NOT immediately relevant to this discussion.

- Wild harvest vs. aquaculture
- Food safety

Participants List

(Participants who responded to Zoom chat)

Anoushka Concepcion, CT Sea Grant (PI)

Antoinette Clemetson, NY Sea Grant (Co-facilitator)

Melissa Good, AK Sea Grant (Co-facilitator)

Kathryn Carovano, Saltwater Inc. Anchorage AK

David Carey, CT

Aaron Milstein, WA State Seaweed Coop

Linda LaViolette, NYS Dept Agr & Markets (economic development)

Jacyln Robidoux, ME Sea Grant

Louie Krak, LIS Ocena Cluster

Kate Alfanso, ME

John Roach, Observer/interested party

Casey Emmett, The Crop Project

Sam Garwin