



NATIONAL SEAWEED HUB WORK GROUP SUMMARY REPORT

Market Opportunities

Overview

Since 2020, the Seaweed Hub's Market Opportunities Work Group has engaged seaweed businesses, researchers, marketing and industry professionals to capture and organize information about seaweed market challenges and opportunities across the U.S. As expanding markets continue to be high-priority for the domestic seaweed sector, this collaborative effort identified opportunities based on market size, and discussed related priorities in product development, trade representation, and consumer outreach and education that can help drive market expansion.

The work group determined that reaching U.S. consumers will require marketing and awareness campaigns and unified and consistent messaging about seaweed that can be adapted to meet business needs and evolving

markets. These efforts resulted in the production of a science-based, open-source seaweed marketing toolkit for farmers, businesses, and communities working to market U.S. seaweed.

Participating Sectors

- Farmers (current and prospective), businesses, regulators, processors, product producers, non-profit organizations, trade associations, researchers, marketing professionals Sea Grant Facilitators
- Jaclyn Robidoux
Maine Sea Grant
- Gabriela Bradt
New Hampshire Sea Grant

Priorities and Goals

The following priorities and goals were set by the working group.

TOP THREE IN ORDER OF PRIORITY

Consumer Education and Outreach

Product Development and Innovation

Industry Representation

NATIONAL SEAWEED HUB

A Collaborative Partnership

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The Sea Grant National Seaweed Hub is a science-based, non-advocate resource for the domestic seaweed aquaculture industry and its associated stakeholders. This collaboration provides a mechanism to address emerging challenges and share information to support the growth of this new industry. Funded by the NOAA National Sea Grant Program, the National Seaweed Hub provides publicly accessible resources developed in response to stakeholder needs, allowing stakeholders to make more informed decisions.

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Goal Objectives and Actions

Short term: Consumer education and outreach campaigns can be effective ways to market seaweed and can be accomplished relatively short-term.

GOAL 1: CONSUMER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH			
OBJECTIVES	1. Assess and advance the seaweed outreach and education landscape in the U.S.	2. Create a marketing and awareness campaign that can be adapted to meet business needs and evolving markets	3. Provide seaweed producers and promoters with accessible, seaweed-specific marketing assets
TASKS	Evaluate current education and outreach efforts (what works?) to build and inform future efforts; Catalog fundamental market information	Determine key market areas of focus, develop consistent/unified messaging backed by science, and organize this knowledge into an accessible, online resource	Construct an online platform for open-source, digital assets (seaweed graphics, posters, social media, etc.)
COMPLETED	Infographic guide on where seaweed is grown in the U.S. and current market outlets	"Let Seaweed Surprise You" Campaign: Seaweed Marketing Toolkit	Seaweed Marketing Toolkit Digital Assets

Medium term: Product development and innovation is a major factor in driving new markets, and filling specific information gaps in the mid-term will help future products expand and succeed.

GOAL 2: PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION	
OBJECTIVES	1. Categorize market challenges and opportunities by scale of production and market size 2. Determine what information gaps are high-priority for seaweed product producers
TASKS	Discuss and capture the challenges producers face in tapping into small volume "niche" markets, large volume "commodity" markets, and shared challenges across market size (completed) Evaluate information and resource needs that, if advanced, would allow producers to reach more consumers (eg. standards, grading, species nomenclature) (completed)
COMPLETED	Work Group Market Opportunities Presentation (10/29/20) Work Group Online Resources (5/6/21)

Goal Objectives and Actions

Long term: Industry representation and organization may help the sector tap into more long-term marketing efforts, however the current industry is small.

GOAL 3: INDUSTRY REPRESENTATION			
OBJECTIVES	1. Understand the specific benefits seaweed producers are hoping to gain through trade representation	2. Evaluate existing trade groups that may support these needs; help seaweed producers access/understand the value of existing organizations	3. Collaborate with adjacent and active trade organizations to further integrate seaweed and leverage benefits
TASKS	Discuss and capture the needs that the industry is hoping to address, and document the challenges that the small, species-specific representation may face	Draft a list of trade organizations that currently or prospectively represent seaweed producers	Engage leadership of existing trade organizations in the work group (completed) and in future marketing efforts
COMPLETED	Work Group Online Resources (5/6/21)	Work Group Online Resources (5/6/21). Resource could be further expanded	Yes

Next Steps

- Encourage increased funding for community-driven campaigns and events that highlight and advance domestic seaweed.
- Support identified needs to advance product development (consistency in species naming, standards, grading, testing, etc.).
- Facilitate industry engagement with existing trade groups and support organizations.
- Consider marketing efforts that expand access and reach to more diverse audiences.

Ongoing Tasks

- Promote and disseminate the Seaweed Marketing Toolkit.
- Track and evaluate toolkit engagement using web analytics.
- Pursue funding to expand impact and use of the toolkits resources.

For more information, visit:

s.uconn.edu/seaweedhub