

## U. S. Aquaculture

### Why Is Aquaculture Important For The United States?

- More than 80% of the seafood Americans consume is imported.
- Almost half of seafood imports are farmed.
- Americans consume between 6 and 7 million tons of wild and farmed seafood a year.
- Demand continues to grow as more Americans seek the health benefits of eating seafood.
- The United States may need to import as much as 4 million tons of seafood by 2025, based on demand and population growth projections.
- Even with production from wild capture fisheries at fully sustainable levels, increased aquaculture production from domestic or foreign sources will be required to meet demand.
- Growing demand for seafood creates an enormous opportunity for economic growth and new jobs in the U.S. aquaculture industry.

The United States needs both wild and farmed seafood products to meet future demand for seafood. Working together, the federal and state governments, research institutions, the aquaculture industry, and coastal communities are exploring options for increasing aquaculture production in the United States.

### What Is Aquaculture?

**Aquaculture** is the breeding, rearing and harvesting of plants and animals in all types of water environments, including ponds, rivers, lakes and the ocean. Similar to agriculture, aquaculture can take place in the natural environment or in a manmade environment.

**Marine aquaculture** is the culturing of saltwater aquatic species, such as oysters, clams, mussels, shrimp, and salmon in ocean waters. It also includes stock enhancement, which is the release of hatchery raised fish and shellfish to restore populations in the marine environment.



# Massachusetts Aquaculture



Massachusetts had an active aquaculture industry as far back as 1999, when more than 450 individuals and companies participated in aquaculture. Of those operations, nearly 400 marine shellfish culture enterprises were growing primarily quahogs and American oysters. The Commonwealth's finfish growers produce primarily three species: hybrid striped bass, tilapia, and trout.

The Commonwealth's aquaculture industry is robust and produces both marine and freshwater aquatic species for food, education, ornamental, bait, and sport fishing activities. Nine species of shellfish and 15 species of finfish are cultured experimentally or commercially.

In 2005, Massachusetts had 157 aquaculture farms worth an estimated \$9.3 million. Farmed shellfish dominates marine aquaculture in the State. The shellfish industry has been steadily growing at a rate of 10% each year for the past decade. With the advent of new technologies and investment, there are increasing opportunities for further expansion and development of aquaculture in Massachusetts.

## Massachusetts Aquaculture Opportunities For Growth

- Offshore mussel farming using long line techniques developed by the University of New Hampshire and New Hampshire fishermen
- Stock replenishment of summer flounder and other species
- Offshore finfish aquaculture
- Expansion of coastal oyster and clam farming



## Information Links

Massachusetts Aquaculture Association  
[www.massaqua.org](http://www.massaqua.org)

Massachusetts Dept. of Agricultural Resources  
Aquaculture Program  
[www.mass.gov/agr/aquaculture/index.htm](http://www.mass.gov/agr/aquaculture/index.htm)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Sea Grant Program  
<http://web.mit.edu/seagrant/aqua/>