

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.



South Carolina Aquaculture



South Carolina's aquaculture industry cultivates marine and freshwater species, including native clams, finfish, and bait species like shrimp, eels, and fiddler crabs. Finfish hatcheries are also producing redfish and other species for stock replenishment. In 2005, sales from South Carolina's 85 farms totaled \$4.7 million.

South Carolina is an important research and development center for commercial aquaculture and stock enhancement. The Hollings Marine Lab (a consortium of state, federal and university researchers), the state's Waddell Mariculture Center, and other government laboratories are at the forefront of stock replenishment research for redfish, striped bass, sturgeon, and cobia.

With its long coastline and favorable climate, South Carolina is well positioned to expand aquaculture production. Passage of state legislation opened new industry expansion opportunities for growers in state waters. South Carolina's strength in aquaculture is its diversity, which will help increase statewide revenues from the current annual levels of \$10 to \$15 million.

South Carolina Aquaculture Opportunities For Growth

- Shellfish farming
- Stock replenishment of marine finfish species, especially for recreational fishing
- Hatchery production of marine finfish species
- Aquaculture research on seafood health and nutrition, stock replenishment, and closed system production
- Bait shrimp and marine shrimp production in land-based closed systems



Information Links

- South Carolina Aquaculture Association
<http://www.sdda.state.sc.us/relatedaglink/associations/aqua/aquacultureassociation.htm>
- South Carolina Sea Grant
<http://www.scseagrant.org/>
- South Carolina Marine Resources Research Institute
<http://www.dnr.sc.gov/marine/mrri/aquaculture.html>
- Hollings Marine Lab
<http://www.hml.noaa.gov/stressors/aqua/>