CENTER FOR TROPICAL AND SUBTROPICAL AQUACULTURE

Regional e-Notes ~March 2023 ~ Volume 15, Issue 3

Letter from the Director

Aloha,

After two years of virtual meetings, CTSA excitedly held our annual Board of Directors meeting in person once again on March 3 (pictured). While it was a joy to gather with colleagues on the UH campus, it was also a time to share our heartfelt gratitude for two long-term board members who are retiring this year. Dr. Lee Yudin, Dean of the University of Guam College of Agriculture, and Singeru Singeo, Dean of the College of Micronesia, each served on the CTSA Board for more than two decades. They have both been strong representatives in amplifying the voices of our industry in the U.S .Affiliated Pacific Islands, and their presence and input on the Board will be missed. On behalf of our program and the entire regional aquaculture industry, I would like to extend a mahalo nui loa to Lee and Singeru and wish them wonderful retirements.

Per standard procedure, a primary focus of the Board meeting was to review, discuss, and approve the CTSA annual Plan of Work. The seven new proposals included in the FY22 PoW will be implemented upon final approval from the USDA. We are looking forward to supporting this next round of aquaculture research and development projects in our region.

On another note, March is National Nutrition Month, the annual education and information campaign that focuses on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. I'd like to use this opportunity to encourage all of our readers to review and follow the USDA dietary guidelines, which recommend that most people consume two servings of seafood per week. This is relatively common in our region where fish and other seafood are consumed at nearly twice the amount per capita as elsewhere in the U.S.. However --as with all food-- we need to take proper precautions to ensure that our seafood is safe to consume. Most seafood is currently imported from foreign countries, and the FDA must actively engage with regulatory counterparts in export countries to ensure food safety. Looking to the future, one of the best ways we can secure a safe seafood supply is to produce more of it domestically. While we may not be able to completely eliminate our dependence on imported seafood, we can make an impact by investing in farming and harvesting from our own waters.

Shortly, CTSA will call for the next round of research and development projects to support the growth of aquaculture in our region. Please take a moment to complete the survey in this month's e-Notes (link below) and let us know your thoughts on the areas we should emphasize to see more sustainable aquaculture in our region.

Mahalo,
Dr. Cheng-Sheng Lee
Executive Director, CTSA

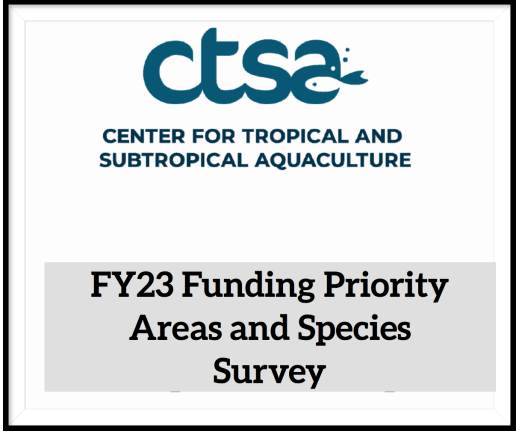
CTSA Needs Your Input: FY23 Funding Priority Areas

In an effort to get the most complete picture of the needs and priorities of our regional aquaculture industry, we are calling for your assistance and input. **Please click here to take our FY2023 Priority Areas and Species survey** to help us determine the priority species and areas of focus for the FY2023 development cycle. Please complete the survey by April 25.

This survey lists the priority areas included in our FY22 'Request for Pre-Proposals,' released last year, and

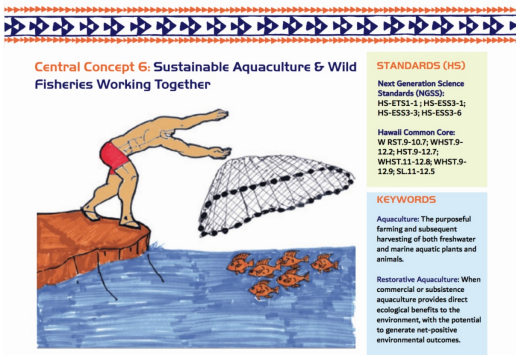
requests that participants indicate whether or not each area remains a priority for regional aquaculture development and funding support. There is an option to write in new priority areas that were not identified in FY22.

The survey should only take a couple of minutes to complete. Please email Meredith Brooks at mbrooks@ctsa.org with any questions or other suggestions. We will release the FY2023 Request for Pre-Proposals in May 2023, and are developing the priority areas with input from our Industry Advisory Council, Technical Committee, Board of Directors, and stakeholders like you!



CTSA A.Q.U.A. Education Program Update // New Curriculum Lessons

In an effort to improve aquaculture and marine science comprehension in the region, CTSA has designed and implemented a multi-faceted education and outreach program titled A.Q.U.A. (A Quest to Understand Aquaculture). The program began under the auspices of a 2010 'NOAA-PIRO Marine Education Mini Grant' project and its development continues today.



A primary output of the initial project was a simple yet comprehensive informal K-12 curriculum. The curriculum features colorful illustrations and applies a constructivist approach to teach aquaculture in a manner that is relevant and intriguing to youth in the context of multiple disciplines, providing a well-rounded educational experience.

In 2019, CTSA was awarded a NOAA Sea Grant to further develop the program and also assess if and how aquaculture K-12 education impacts student and community perceptions of seafood. Through the project, CTSA leveraged new opportunities and resources to support aquaculture education in three participating schools. We also created new curricula and gathered resources to engage teachers, students and their families. The full results of the project's research on seafood perceptions will be presented later this year; in the meantime, CTSA is excited to release the new curriculum materials.

There are four new lessons added to the A.Q.U.A. curriculum covering the topics of Aquatic Animal Nutrition, Water Quality, Sustainable Aquaculture & Wild Fisheries Working Together; Careers in Aquaculture & Seafood, and Seafood Nutrition. **Click here** to visit the Education section of the CTSA website, or **click here to view / download the new lessons directly**.

SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans Available to Hawaii Small Businesses

Small nonfarm businesses in Maui and Kalawao counties are now eligible to apply for low-interest federal disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration, announced Director Tanya N. Garfield of SBA's Disaster Field Operations Center-West. These loans offset economic losses because of reduced revenues caused by drought in Maui County that began Jan. 1, 2023.

"SBA eligibility covers both the economic impacts on businesses dependent on farmers and ranchers that have suffered agricultural production losses caused by the disaster and businesses directly impacted by the disaster," Garfield said.

Small nonfarm businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and most private nonprofit organizations of any size may qualify for Economic Injury Disaster Loans of up to $2 million to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses which could have been met had the disaster not occurred.

“Eligibility for these loans is based on the financial impact of the disaster only and not on any actual property damage. These loans have an interest rate of 3.305 percentfor businesses and 2.375 percentfor private nonprofit organizations, a maximum term of 30 years and are available to small businesses and most private nonprofits without the financial ability to offset the adverse impact without hardship,” Garfield said.

By law, SBA makes Economic Injury Disaster Loans available when the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture designates an agricultural disaster. The Secretary declared this disaster on March 17, 2023.

Businesses primarily engaged in farming or ranching are not eligible for SBA disaster assistance. Agricultural enterprises should contact the Farm Service Agency about the U.S. Department of Agriculture assistance made available by the Secretary’s declaration. However, nurseries are eligible for SBA disaster assistance in drought disasters.

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/. Applicants may also call SBA’s Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.govfor more information on SBA disaster assistance. For people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services. Completed applications should be mailed to U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

The deadline to apply for economic injury is Nov. 17, 2023.

AquaClip: Waikiki Aquarium Receives Gift of Aquacultured Clams from FSM

After losing $3 million in income due to pandemic closures, the Waikiki Aquarium felt another blow in June 2022, when their beloved giant clam died of natural causes

Staff now have a reason to celebrate thanks to a recent gift of dozens of clams from the Federated States of Micronesia.

The director of the Waikiki Aquarium said the giant clam that passed away was a signature species.

“It’s the one that many, many people who’ve been here over the years and decades come back to see again to see how much it’s grown,” said Dr. Andrew Rossiter. “So, losing that was a big blow.”

Thanks to the Federated States of Micronesia National Aquaculture Centre in Kosrae, the Waikiki Aquarium now has 40 new clams of six different species — two of them are the same as the Waikiki’s late giant clam.

Each one of the clams was aquacultured, which means they were farm-raised as opposed to being found in the wild. NAC manager and operator Martin Selch built his first aquarium and bought clams as a boy.

“And I fell in love with them. It’s just the color, their reaction, and you can, you know, you can sense them, they show you when they feel bad, you can tell,” Selch said.

The vibrant colors that can be seen are not the clams themselves, according to Selch, but algae that grow on them.

They are not yet on display in Waikiki but the Aquarium has big plans on the horizon. Their coral farm will soon be converted into an aquaculture exhibit.

“It’ll be aquaculture clams, aquaculture corals and then a variety of different fishes,” Dr. Rossiter said, “so, it should be a showstopper.”

Officials said the new exhibit should be ready in September 2023.

Source: KHON2 // Original Article

This newsletter is written and prepared by the CTSA Information Specialist Meredith Brooks.
The Center for Tropical and Subtropical Aquaculture (CTSA) is one of five regional aquaculture centers in the United States established and funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) under active grants 2018-38500-28886, and 2020-38500-32559. The regional aquaculture centers integrate individual and institutional expertise and resources in support of commercial aquaculture development. CTSA was established in 1986 and is jointly administered by the University of Hawaii and the Oceanic Institute of Hawaii Pacific University.

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