CENTER FOR TROPICAL AND SUBTROPICAL AQUACULTURE

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Letter from the Director

Aloha and Happy Halloween!

As we close out the 2023 National Seafood Month and National Pescatarian Month, I am curious to know, did you consume more seafood than you normally do? Throughout the month, NOAA Fisheries and other seafood advocates have shared several ways we can all celebrate National Seafood month, including adding more seafood to our diet, trying a variety of seafood and experimenting with different recipes, and making our seafood more sustainable. These messages echo what we talked about in our last newsletter; partnership among different sectors and agencies is essential to sustainably develop aquaculture and increase seafood consumption.

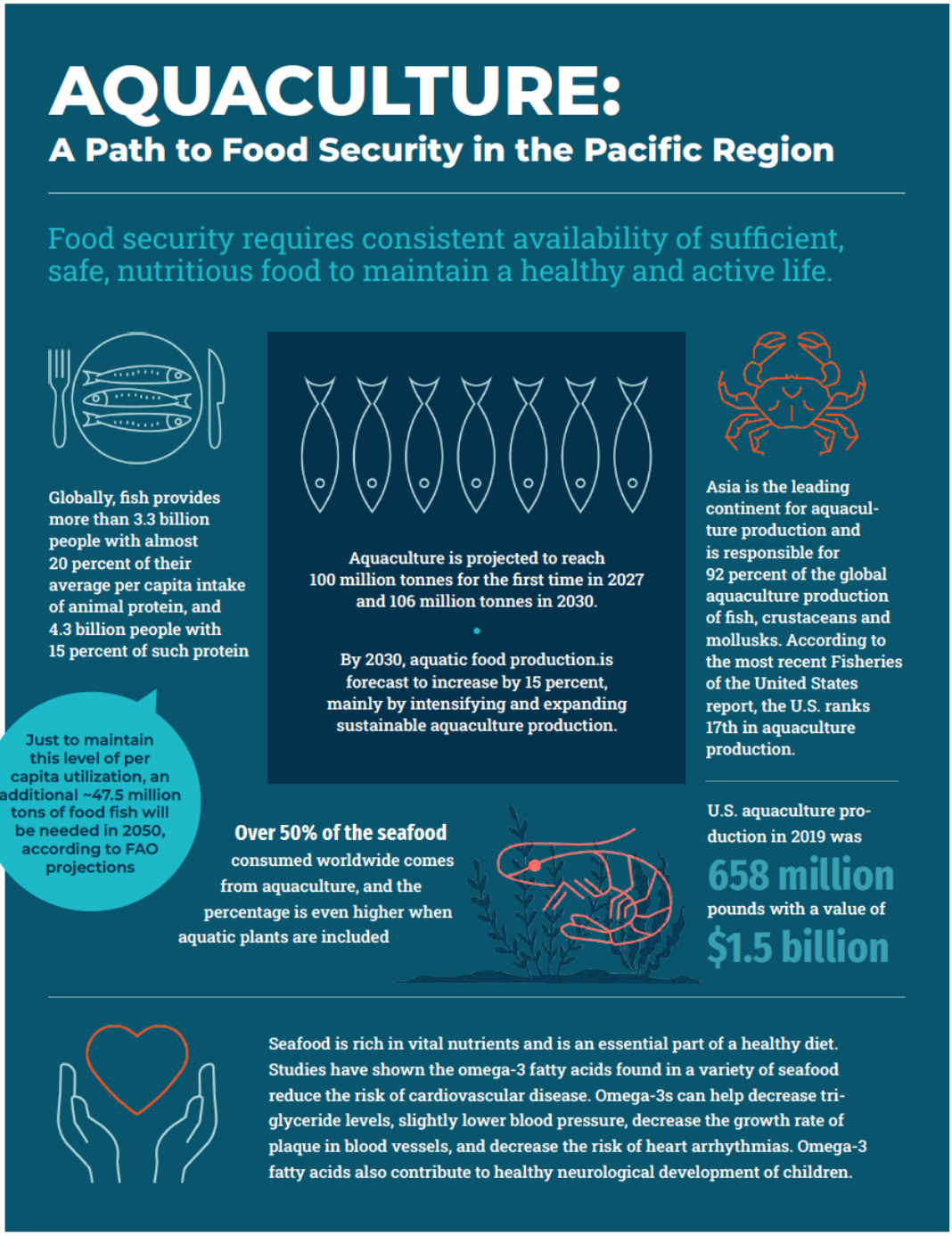
From the USDA dietary guidelines intended to improve human health to the FDA's oversight of food safety, U.S. agencies are focused on shared goals of increasing safe and sustainable seafood. A significant portion of our seafood is imported, so while the FDA is in charge of inspecting imports to ensure the safety of our seafood supply, the agency must also rely on prevention and importer oversight. The most reliable and secure way to get seafood into our diets is through domestic production. To this end, we must use our abundant aquatic farming resources to produce food. If we do it right --and that is the key-- aquaculture also promises to be the most environmentally-friendly method of food production.

To assist aquaculture development in our region, CTSA, CTAHR, and Sea Grant UH held a workshop last week on the topic of aquatic feeds. At the workshop, Dr. Stuart Nakamoto presented a tool he created to estimate the cost for producing feed locally. We are hopeful that anyone who is interested and/or knowledgeable in feed mill development will test the worksheet and make any suggested changes. Ultimately, we hope to develop the best strategy for dealing with the critical issue of feed supply so we can see more profitable and sustainable seafood production in the region.

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

Your Input is Needed! Aquatic Animal Health in Hawaii

The University of Hawaii is conducting an initial query to Hawaii aquaculture stakeholders to better understand aquatic animal disease and production concerns, and how you respond to morbidities/mortalities at your facility. This is a preliminary questionnaire intended to guide future stakeholder engagement aimed at improving ability to identify and address the needs of the aquaculture community. This questionnaire is provided by the University of Hawaii Manoa and the Hawaii Department of Agriculture, with funding provided by CTSA. Click here to take the survey.



Registration Open for Foundations of Shellfish Farming

Foundations of Shellfish Farming is a training course offered at the University of Connecticut for new and prospective farmers and those who simply seek to learn more about aquaculture practices and techniques. Topics that will be covered include how to establish and operate a shellfish business; leasing and permitting requirements; considerations for gear, vessels, and facilities, shellfish biology, aquaculture techniques and best practices, and risks involved in farming shellfish. Although the course will concentrate on Long Island Sound waters within the jurisdiction of Connecticut, the topics and practices covered are applicable in the Northeast United States and potentially beyond. Click here to learn more.

AquaClip: Hawaii's Aquaculture Industry Is Set To Boom But It Needs State Help

Hawaii's $90 million aquaculture industry is predicting significant growth over the next five years and is calling on legislators to help.

Sales of Hawaii's aquaculture products jumped by 12% in 2022 and production has more than tripled in the past 20 years, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, bucking the statewide trend of declining agriculture.

The potential for the industry is boundless, industry insiders told the Hawaii AgriFood Summit last week, and aquaculture has the potential to diversify Hawaii's economy and increase local food production.

Algae and fish farming featured prominently in discussions at the two-day summit, with speakers considering everything from the use of algae-based feed for cattle to developing technologies for more sustainable fish farms.

"I often think that we don't get enough credit for how much we've achieved in aquaculture," Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association president Ron Weidenbach said at the conference.

Hawaii has been responsible for some of the biggest innovations in global aquaculture, including developing the $30 million per year export industry with SPF brood shrimp.

It also hosts the only offshore fish farm in the country.

And one of the state's most valuable crops overall is algae, worth almost $45.4 million last year, according to USDA.

Most of those sales are in the form of spirulina supplements, Pacific Business News reported, but more avenues need to be explored to cultivate and direct farmed shellfish, fish and algae into the food system, says Cheng-Sheng Lee, executive director of the Center for Tropical and Subtropical Aquaculture at the University of Hawaii.

If the industry's sales continue to grow at around 12%, it would be worth $230 million in five years.

"I think that's achievable and that would put us up as the No. 1 agricultural commodity," Weidenbach said.

But the aquaculture industry recognizes that it needs to gain favor in the Legislature to help fuel its growth.

While it is unlikely that Hawaii-grown and farmed fish, shellfish and algae will meet ever meet local demand, Lee says, it can still increase production and boost the state's food security. But there needs to be a coordinated effort.

"You cannot just rely on government or producers or researchers. In order to move forward we need to work together," Lee said.

Source: Honolulu Civil Beat // More Information

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 2020-38500-32559 and 2022-38500-38099. 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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