

Jeanne McKnight

The United States currently ranks 16th in the world in terms of aquaculture production. Today, we import billions of dollars of high-value species such as salmon and trout from countries such as Norway, Canada, and Chile. Shouldn't we be growing more "local" products in our own waters? We have the ideal growing conditions for salmon and other finfish species. Why not look at aquaculture as a way to bring more local "Grown in Washington" seafood to the table?

Having worked in the seafood industry for more than 25 years, I have seen the continual advances being made in aquaculture technology, from underwater cameras and sensors to the development of better feed to advances in husbandry, disease prevention, and animal welfare. This is a young industry but it is also continually evolving for the better.

We believe the Department of Ecology should continue offering NPDES Permits for the rearing of salmon (both Atlantic and Pacific species), trout, and other finfish species. Aquaculture should be regarded as an important means to achieve food security. We see the NPDES permit system as a way to help set reasonable limits to and controls of pollutants in the environment.



Northwest Aquaculture Alliance

WHO WE ARE

The Washington State-based Northwest Aquaculture Alliance (NWAA) represents aquaculture producers and support-related businesses in Washington, Oregon Idaho, Montana, British Columbia—and beyond.

Alliance members share a vision of raising high-quality, sustainably produced, nutritious fish and shellfish, farmed in marine waters, freshwater, or in land-based operations that we can offer to local, regional, and global markets.

WHY AQUACULTURE?

The United States currently ranks 16th in the world in aquaculture production. The Northwest region, with its abundant supply of natural resources, know-how, and hard-working people, can—and should—produce enough farmed seafood to help the U.S. compete with imports from other aquaculture-producing countries.

Aquaculture currently provides more than half of the seafood consumed worldwide—and that percentage is increasing as global demand for seafood continues to rise and wild fisheries are fully exploited. Aquaculture is important for many reasons:

FOR OUR HEALTH

- Americans today consume just a little over 15 pounds of heart-healthy seafood (finfish and shellfish) per person annually, a number that falls significantly short of USDA dietary recommendations.
- Public health experts encourage people to eat seafood at least twice a week for optimal health. Currently, an estimated 84,000 premature deaths occur in the U.S. due to the failure to eat enough seafood.
- Aquaculture helps make healthy, nutritious seafood more widely available and affordable.

FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

- Aquaculture production (finfish, shellfish) produces the lowest carbon footprint of any kind of animal protein production and requires less space and feed.
- The global aquaculture community has embraced the challenge of reducing the use of fishmeal in feed, substituting algae oils and other non-fishmeal sources. The feed conversion ratio for farmed fish today is 1:1, compared with 1:7 for broiler chickens, 2:9 for hogs, and 6:8 for cattle.
- If we are concerned about reducing the environmental impacts of animal production, then we should promote aquaculture.

FOR A STRONG ECONOMY

- Currently, more than 90 percent of the seafood consumed in the United States is imported.
- These seafood imports contribute yearly to a massive trade deficit.
- In 2018 alone, the United States imported an estimated \$4 billion worth of salmon.
- Approximately 60 percent of imported seafood products (salmonids, tilapia, shrimp/shellfish) are farm-raised in countries such as Norway, Scotland, Chile, Vietnam, Thailand, and China.
- Aquaculture gives us the opportunity to participate in this global trend toward farming the seas and inland waters and to do so to the benefit of our region's economy family-wage jobs.
- If we do not promote and foster aquaculture in the United States, other countries will continue to reap the benefit of meeting global demand—including family-wage jobs, business growth, economic stimulation, and the improvement and evolution of know-how and technology.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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