Sea Grant Seaweed Hub

Needs Assessment Results
Needs Assessment Goal

- Objectives of the survey:
  - Describe overarching challenges for the industry
  - Document the breadth and depth of stakeholders
  - Identify opportunities for the Seaweed Hub
Survey Design

- Questions designed collaboratively with SG Hub membership
- Focus on identifying challenges and needs across geographies and industry roles
- Differing lines of questions based on role(s) in industry
  - Some parallel questions
Survey Administration

- Qualtrics XM platform via anonymous link
- Rollout via recruitment email from 11 Sea Grant representatives to their respective contacts
  - Follow up/reminder email sent
- Responses covering January 6, 2019 to February 18, 2020
- Total respondents = 259
States Represented

In what state(s) do you engage in the seaweed industry? (N = 291)
Roles in the industry

How would you describe your role in the seaweed industry? (N = 351)

- Prospective grower
- Permitted grower
- Nursery/seed-string producer
- Regulator
- Processor
- Value-added processor
- Culinary professional
- Researcher
- Other

- Harvester
- Extension
- Educator
- Government
- Conservation

Number of Responses
Species of Interest for Growers

Number of Responses

Prospective Grower
Permitted grower

N = 55
Challenges Identified - Regulators

Regulators - Public Health (N = 35)

- Education about regulations for industry participants
- Clear regulations
- Information on food safety
- Information about safe environments for growing
- Funding
- Other
Challenges Identified - Regulators

Regulators - Permitting (N = 88)

- Assistance for growers about regulations
- Environmental information on favorable growing conditions
- Gear design and/or farming infrastructure
- Potential environmental interactions
- Spread of non-native species, pathogens, HABs
- Source of seed-stock
- Public perceptions
- Applicant experience in boater/on-the-water safety
- Other
Prices – Processors & Growers

Please note: The small sample size represented here are NOT representative of the market as a whole.

- Processor range of all reported prices = $0.50 – $22.00/lb (N = 5)
- Grower range of all reported prices = $0.55 - $20.00 (N = 14)

In the last year, did you purchase seaweed at a guaranteed or set price?
(Processors - N = 22)
Challenges Identified - Processors

Challenges - Processors (N = 38)

- Source options
- Consistent supply
- Transporting product
- I haven't tried to secure local seaweed
- Other

Number of Responses
Challenges Identified - Nursery

Challenges - Nursery (N = 24)

Number of Responses

- Obtaining wild seed-stock
- Culture contamination
- Meeting demand
- Operational costs
- Identifying nursery facilities
- Meeting or obtaining certifications (i.e., licenses)
- Other
Challenges Identified – Permitted Grower

Permitted Grower (N = 40)

Number of Responses

- Access to infrastructure
- Food safety guidelines
- Post-harvest guidelines
- Access to nutritional information
- Access to consistent supply
- Access to locally produced seaweed
- Finding buyers for product
- Access to financial resources
- Economics on costs of production or market value
- Other
- I have not encountered any challenges
Challenges Identified - Culinary Professionals

Culinary Professionals (N = 25)
Challenges Identified – Prospective Grower

Prospective Grower (N = 173)

Number of Responses

- Assistance with business planning: 10
- Market opportunities: 27
- Information on the permitting process: 33
- Information on food safety and handling: 17
- Technical assistance with production: 36
- Access to seed: 25
- Other: 15
Challenges - Researchers (N = 109)

- Finding growers/ producers to participate: 5 responses
- Access to local seed-string: 15 responses
- Understanding of post-harvest opportunities (including processing, storage, and transportation infrastructure): 30 responses
- Concerns about public health: 5 responses
- Concerns about food safety: 20 responses
- Guidance on the permitting process for seaweed research: 10 responses
- I haven’t found any challenges: 5 responses
- Other: 10 responses
Challenges by Work Group

Challenges - Categorized by Work Group (N = 397)

- Production systems
- Post-harvest opportunities and infrastructure
- Regulations
- Market opportunities

Number of Responses

- Processors
- Nursery
- Proposective Grower
- Permitted Grower
- Culinary Professionals
- Researchers