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# REGIONAL AQUACULTURE EXTENSION SPECIALIST (RAES)<sup>1</sup>

Project *Termination Report* for the Period  
September 1, 2009 to August 31, 2011

**NCRAC FUNDING:** \$150,000 (September 1, 2009 to August 31, 2011)

## **PARTICIPANTS:**

Ronald E. Kinnunen	Michigan State University	Michigan
Joseph E. Morris	Iowa State University	Iowa
Larry G. Olsen	Michigan State University	Michigan
Christopher Weeks	Michigan State University	Michigan
<b>Industry Advisory Council Liaison:</b>		
John Reynolds	Midwest Fish and Crayfish, Merrifield	Wisconsin
<b>Extension Liaison:</b>		
Geoffrey Wallat	Ohio State University	Ohio

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## **REASON FOR TERMINATION**

The objectives were completed and the funds terminated. However, an additional RAES project is underway for the period September 1, 2011 to August 31, 2013 under new objectives. This termination report is for the 2009-2011 RAES project established under the following objectives.

## **PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

1. In conjunction with the NCRAC Industry Advisory Council and state aquaculture extension contacts, assess and prioritize North Central Region (NCR) industry needs, focusing on issues with regional significance.
2. Develop and implement strategies to address pertinent needs - interact with pertinent NCRAC and non-NCRAC aquaculture initiatives to accomplish identified strategies.

3. Develop and facilitate “linkages” among agencies, industry, academia, and other relevant entities to foster open, meaningful dialog on critical NCR issues.
4. Coordinate efforts for seeking non-NCRAC support to facilitate information and technology transfer to the industry.

## **PRINCIPLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS** *OBJECTIVE 1*

In anticipation of this objective, the RAES (project PI), along with the Industry Advisory Council (IAC) chair, William Lynch, formulated and conducted a NCR Aquaculture Industry Survey in 2009 focusing on critical needs and priorities as perceived by the NCR aquaculture community. In all, 232 surveys were mailed to a random sample of a target of 20 individuals in each state within the NCR. Participants were representatives from

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<sup>1</sup> NCRAC has funded a number of Extension activities, both as stand-alone projects or as components of species- or topical-specific projects. This Termination Report is for one of the 16 stand-alone Extension projects, the second Regional Aquaculture Extension Specialist (RAES) project, which was chaired by Christopher Weeks. It was a 2-year project that began September 1, 2009.

## NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL AQUACULTURE CENTER

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industry, State and Federal environmental agencies, and academia. The survey received 62 responses for a response rate of 27%. Participants were asked to rate impediments facing the industry and priorities they felt were necessary to help improve aquaculture industry development in the region. Results from the survey have been incorporated into a NCR Aquaculture Critical Needs Assessment Report which is currently under review by the RAES Project Oversight Committee and expected to be distributed to NCRAC members before the 2012 NCRAC Annual Program Planning Meeting. Survey results have also been made available online ([http://www.ncrac.org/roadmap/webinfo/publications/09\\_survey\\_results.pdf](http://www.ncrac.org/roadmap/webinfo/publications/09_survey_results.pdf)).

### OBJECTIVE 2

Over the course of the project, the RAES has given several presentations on subjects specific to regional aquaculture industry development in Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, and Wisconsin, and has met and talked with producers from all 12 NCR states. Through both survey response and discussion, the majority of industry members identified restrictive and confusing regulations as the greatest impediment to industry growth. To that end the RAES committed substantial effort to help clarify regulations imposed on NCR aquaculture producers, including the following tasks:

- Monitored and updated the NCRAC Web site *State Importation and Transportation Requirements for Cultured Aquatic Animals*. The site was originally developed by the current RAES in 2003, and improved in 2009 with help from the NCRAC Associate Director's office as part of the RAES project. Views to this Web site have increased from approximately 500 hits per month in 2009-2010, to an average of 800-1,000 views per month in 2011.

The Web site's pages have also been linked to aquaculture regulation searches from the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) aquaculture Web site.

- Summarized import requirements for NCR states on the NCR Aquaculture Roadmap Web site in table format. The summary is unique, concise, and has received good feedback: [http://www.ncrac.org/roadmap/webinfo/pdf\\_downloads/NCRAC%20import%20ref.pdf](http://www.ncrac.org/roadmap/webinfo/pdf_downloads/NCRAC%20import%20ref.pdf).
- Sought out information from aquaculture related list serves, news, and personal contact information from across the nation for dissemination to the industry.
- Worked with regulators and industry personnel across the region to try to minimize disruption of commerce due to viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS).
- Encouraged active participation by the NCR aquaculture community in regulatory rule making processes. Examples include posting of, and industry solicitation for Federal Register comments on APHIS reactions to VHS and the publication of the National Aquatic Animal Health Plan.

Information transfer was another major focus area for the RAES. In 2009, the RAES initiated a project to enhance the NCR Aquaculture Roadmap from its original short PDF file, into a user friendly aquaculture information outreach tool. The Roadmap Web site provides easy access to all Regional Aquaculture Center publications, other non-copyrighted articles, regulations, NCR state associations, extension Web sites, extension, research, and state agency contacts across the region, upcoming events, and other materials: <http://www.ncrac.org/roadmap/index.htm>.

In 2010, the RAES with the NCRAC IAC Chair, William Lynch, submitted written recommendations to the NCRAC Board for a revision to the project selection protocol followed at NCRAC Annual Program Planning Meetings. The recommended changes were designed to more narrowly define key targeted priorities, allow for increased Technical Committee involvement, and improve the effectiveness of the NCRAC project selection. The Board approved the recommended protocol revisions, which were initiated at the 2011 Annual Program Planning Meeting.

Current news items and potentially useful topical information were actively sought from several national and international sources for distribution to the aquaculture community through the NCR Fish Culture List Serve. The list serve has grown from under 90 subscribers at the start of the RAES project to about 200 at present. The NCR Fish Culture List Serve is maintained out of Iowa State University and supported by NCRAC's Associate Director's office. Subscription is available through the NCR Aquaculture Roadmap Web site.

### *OBJECTIVE 3*

In 2009-2010 the RAES gave presentations at the Michigan Aquaculture Association Meeting, Michigan Department of Agriculture Meeting for Aquatic Animal Health, the Wisconsin Workshop for Veterinarians on Fish Regulatory Medicine, and the Indiana Aquaculture Workshop. The RAES also facilitated and presented at the NCRAC Baitfish Workshop held at the La Crosse Fish Health Center, Wisconsin, and participated in the National Aquaculture Association's (NAA) 4P Workshop, as well as a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point Workshop on VHS and biosecurity, both of which were held in Ohio. A goal of the RAES throughout the course of these

meetings has been to network with industry, academia, and regulatory agency personnel for the purpose of promoting NCR aquaculture industry interests and development.

The RAES project team has identified three organizations where increased membership base among NCRAC members would likely help promote NCR industry interests. These include NAA, Farm Bureau, and the National Association of State Aquaculture Coordinators (NASAC). The RAES is now a member of Michigan Farm Bureau and is under the nomination process for becoming a member of their Aquaculture Advisory Committee. The RAES also attended the National Aquaculture Extension Conference in June 2011 hosted by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and NASAC and gave a poster presentation on the RAES project. The RAES is now a member of the USDA-sponsored eXtension Freshwater Aquaculture Group and serves in an "ask the expert" role on regional issues. The RAES also has plans to get more involved with NAA (as part of the 2011-2013 RAES project).

### *OBJECTIVE 4*

The RAES has recently submitted a final version of an amended proposal to Michigan Sea Grant entitled "Integrated Assessment - Expansion of Michigan's Existing Commercial Aquaculture Activities into a Major Sustainable Seafood Production Industry." The proposal is expected to be recommended for funding by Michigan Sea Grant and begin in spring 2012. This project will provide for a full time position through Michigan State University for two years and approximately \$268,000 for use in development and implementation of a commercial seafood sector strategic plan in Michigan. The RAES will act in a supervisory role only, and will pursue other

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## **NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL AQUACULTURE CENTER**

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funding opportunities for aquaculture research and extension for other NCR states in similar fashion (for the 2011-2013 project). The RAES has also served on three State and Federal grant review panels for U.S. aquaculture program development (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Southern Regional Aquaculture Center, and Ohio Sea Grant).

In 2011, the RAES completed a review entitled "Incorporating Deliverables into the NCRAC Project Development Process (Review)." The report will be made available to NCRAC members prior to the 2012 NCRAC Annual Program Planning Meeting. Other information transfer activities developed, facilitated, and maintained by the RAES have been described above.

### **IMPACTS**

- Increased knowledge, awareness, and accessibility of information regarding aquaculture, baitfish, interstate transport, and health certification requirements to the industry and aquaculture community in the NCR.
- Increased knowledge (and potential interests) in the area of aquatic animal health to qualified and/or certified fish health inspectors.
- Increased non NCRAC funding support for NCR aquaculture industry development.

### **RECOMMENDED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES**

Two assessment/reviews have been completed and will be distributed to NCRAC members prior to the 2012 NCRAC Annual Program Planning Meeting:

- NCR Aquaculture Critical Needs Assessment Report

- Incorporating Deliverables into the NCRAC Project Development Process (Review)

A new RAES project has begun (2011-2013) under new objectives described below:

1. Continue RAES support to the NCR aquaculture community through ongoing activities in areas of liaison services, leadership, assessing and addressing industry needs, and information transfer.
2. Develop and implement strategies to address and promote aquaculture sustainability in the NCR.
3. Develop and strengthen partnerships from within the NCR and outside the region among regulatory agencies, industry, academia, and other relevant entities to foster open, meaningful dialog on critical issues and build support for the NCR aquaculture industry.
4. Coordinate efforts for seeking non-NCRAC support for NCR aquaculture development.
5. Examine regional aquaculture development and assess NCRAC research and extension activities in terms of impacts on the NCR aquaculture industry. Make recommendations for improving NCRAC projects in terms of incorporating measures of program success.

### **SUPPORT**

NCRAC has provided \$150,000 which is the entire amount allocated for this 2-year project.

### **PUBLICATIONS, MANUSCRIPTS, OR PAPERS PRESENTED**

See the Appendix for a cumulative output for all NCRAC-funded Extension activities.