

REGIONAL AQUACULTURE EXTENSION SPECIALIST (RAES)⁵

Project *Termination Report* for the Period
September 1, 2005 to August 31, 2009

NCRAC FUNDING: \$199,624 (September 1, 2005 to August 31, 2009)

PARTICIPANTS:

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<i>Extension Liaison:</i>		
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REASON FOR TERMINATION

Project objectives completed.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- (1) Provide leadership for the aquaculture industry in the North Central Region (NCR)
- (2) Enhance information transfer.

⁵ 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 14 stand-alone Extension projects which was chaired by Laura G. Tiu. It was a 3-year project that began September 1, 2005.

PRINCIPAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OBJECTIVE 1

- (1) The RAES, Christopher T. Weeks, has provided direct personal contact to the aquaculture industry by phone, meetings, seminars and workshops across the NCR. In addition to one-on-one communication with industry members, RAES leadership activities included:
 - Representation for the NCR industry at a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) open meeting and an aquatic invasive species workshop (Romulus, Michigan).
 - Presentation of talk entitled “VHS a Regional Industry Perspective,” at the Illinois VHS Conference and Workshop, April 2008.
 - Administration of the NCR-Fish- Culture list serve for providing current and relevant information to subscribing members of the NCR aquaculture industry (current subscription stands at approximately 90 individuals).
 - Working with regulators and industry personnel across the region to try to minimize disruption of commerce due to VHS.
 - Posting of, and industry solicitation for Federal Register comments in regards to APHIS actions on VHS and the National Aquatic Animal Health Plan.

- (2) In addition to the activities described above, the RAES has made personal contact with principle state regulators responsible for aquaculture and baitfish activities in each NCR state, and solicited members of this group to participate in the VHS Summit at the United States Trout Farmers Association (USTFA) Midwest Aquaculture Conference, September, 2008. In this process the RAES has developed a positive working relationship with many state regulators across the region. He also has encouraged members of the industry to contact him for problems or questions related to industry matters. Much of this support has been in regards to fish production and health related issues.

- (3) The RAES was instrumental in developing a plan with the Michigan Department of Agriculture for the USDA 2008 Cooperative Agreements for VHS. This plan alleviated VHS testing costs for 20 Michigan producers in 2008 while providing USDA APHIS with important VHS surveillance information.

OBJECTIVE 2

- < In addition to the transfer of information on issues describe for Objective 1, the RAES has taken responsibility to post and update all aquaculture and baitfish regulations, aquaculture contact information, and approved aquatic species and fish health certification requirements for the 12 NCR states and 9 adjacent states. This information is available on the North Central Regional Aquaculture Center (NCRAC) Web site, link: North Central Region Aquaculture Contacts, Transport Regulations, and Approved Aquatic Species ([http://www.ncrac.org/Info/StateImportR](http://www.ncrac.org/Info/StateImportRegs/stateregsmain.htm) egs/stateregsmain.htm). This Web site is recognized on the APHIS aquaculture Web site.
- < The RAES has actively sought out industry-related information from established partnerships, local and regional list servers and Web sites, and has distributed this information on the NCR Fish Culture list serve. In addition, information obtained from the RAES 2008-2009 project is in the process of being posted in a Web site entitled “NCR Aquaculture Roadmap.” This Web site is expected to be live in December 2009 and will be carried forward by the RAES in 2010 and 2011. The NCR Aquaculture Roadmap is intended to provide easy access to aquaculture information including all RAC publications, extension programs and contact information, and other information to internet users.
- < The RAES has worked directly with other extension outlets in the region to promote aquaculture and disseminate pertinent information to the industry. These include the Aquaculture Regional Extension Facilitator, the Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facility, Indiana Soybean Alliance, state aquaculture associations, and academic extension personnel from across the region.
- < The RAES has attended a number of state association meetings across the NCR. Often time is provided for discussion on industry needs, NCRAC project funding, and RAES functions and extension programs.
- < In January 2009, the project PI, in collaboration with William Lynch, NCRAC Industry Advisory Council Chair, conducted a mail survey to over 200 members of the aquaculture community across the 12 states within the NCR. Potential respondents were selected randomly from a NCRAC database at a target of 20 individuals per state. The survey was designed specifically to prioritize NCR industry needs of regional significance. Preliminary results were reported at the NCRAC Annual Planning Meeting in February 2009 and passed forward to the Director for distribution to NCRAC members.
- < In May 2009, the RAES, in combined effort with the University of Wisconsin, School of Veterinary Medicine (UWSVM) and Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, established a tuition waiver for certified veterinarians to take the online section of the Fish Health Medicine Program offered by UWSVM. This project resulted in 44 certified veterinarians enrolling in the course from across the nation.
- < In July 2009, the RAES drafted a report entitled “Improving Information Transfer to the NCR Aquaculture Industry, Extension Priorities and Work Plan Development.” This report is an assessment of current information transfer methodologies in the NCR aquaculture industry with focus placed on potential improvement, accessibility, and utilization. The intent of this review is to generate discussion within the NCR aquaculture community towards forming a collaborative effort centered on improving information dissemination into the aquaculture industry. The report is currently in draft form and will be carried forward to the RAES 2010-2011 project.

RECOMMENDED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- < Identify key members of the NCR aquaculture community who are willing to provide leadership roles and work in improving information transfer methods. Form a work group consisting of researchers, industry members, and extension personnel.
- < Identify quantifiable measures of progress in regards to information dissemination efforts.
- < Identify hindrances to industry development.
- < Identify successful aquaculture ventures inside and outside the region. Identify key characteristics that may have helped lead to success.
- < Shore up current Web-based information dissemination methods including assessing what is out there and focusing on how to direct (streamline) specific inquiries to acceptable sources/answers.
- < Complete the NCRAC Roadmap Web site and solicit partners, extension material, and research information from across the region to help make the site a valuable information outlet for the NCR aquaculture industry.

Many, if not all, of the recommended follow-up activities will be undertaken in a new 2-year RAES project which began September 1, 2009.

IMPACTS

Due to a number of factors, direct impacts of the RAES activities on the NCR aquaculture industry during the project are difficult to assess. However, the following tasks have either been completed or are being carried forward in the new RAES project:

- < The North Central Region Aquaculture Contacts, Transport Regulations, and Approved Aquatic Species Web site has received much attention: with approximately 800 hits per month from August–October 2009. This site is referenced by the APHIS aquaculture Web site.
- < RAES activities occurring through this funded project have provided much of the base work for the NCR Aquaculture Roadmap, soon to be launched. It is expected that the Roadmap Web site will effectively complement, and receive as good if not better attendance, than the transport regulation Web site described above.
- < Posting of the Roadmap site is expected to increase list serve subscription and help provide collaborative input from across the region in regards to indentifying industry needs and dissemination of research and extension information to the industry.
- < Impacts of VHS on the region have been minimized to an extent since the Emergency Order (October 2006). APHIS is expected to come out with a VHS proposed rule in the spring of 2010. While negative impacts of future federal and state regulations are likely, open dialogs do exist between the industry and most agencies holding regulatory authority.

It is hoped that a major portion of the 44 certified veterinarians taking the online Fish Health Medicine Program will remain interested in fish health and actively assist the aquaculture industry.

Regional Aquaculture Extension Specialist (RAES)

SUPPORT

NCRAC provided \$199,624 to Ohio State University for this 3-year project.

PUBLICATIONS, MANUSCRIPTS, OR PAPERS PRESENTED

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