
AQUACULTURE REGIONAL EXTENSION FACILITATOR (AREF)¹

Project Termination Report for the Period
September 1, 2003 to August 31, 2005

NCRAC FUNDING: \$100,000 (September 1, 2003 to August 31, 2005)

PARTICIPANT:

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REASON FOR TERMINATION

The projects objectives were completed.

the AREF Web site and the dedicated phone hotline based through the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Great Lakes WATER Institute.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- (1) Develop communication strategies for the region, i.e., hotline, list server.
- (2) Support state aquaculture associations.
- (3) Develop a resource matrix.
- (4) Organize regional conferencesC proceedings/publications.
- (5) Information needs assessment of producers.

AREF Web Site (www.ncaref.org): In January 2004, the North Central AREF Web site was established as a tool to assist current and potential aquaculturists of the NCR. This Web site embodies the aquaculture information resource matrix (see Objective 3) for the region and contains publications, state aquaculture associations= contact information, references, announcements, and calendars of events. The goal is to have a regionally focused, user-friendly resource for regional aquaculturists. The intent is not to duplicate, but to complement existing Web- based resources that typically take a broader sweeping view of aquaculture that can make it more difficult and time consuming to find an appropriate answer to a regionally specific inquiry. The AREF site

PRINCIPAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OBJECTIVE 1

As a result of this project two new communication aids have been established to assist aquaculture information transfer specific to the North Central Region (NCR):

¹NCRAC has funded numerous Extension activities, both as stand-alone projects or as components of species- or topical-specific projects. This termination report is for one of the ten stand-alone Extension projects which was chaired by Fred P. Binkowski. It was a 2-year project that began September 1, 2003.

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consolidates contact information for regional expertise within the NCR and provides simplified access to regionally pertinent information resources. The AREF Web site will continue to be updated to provide current aquaculture information, with the focus being on the North Central and Great Lakes regions. The Great Lakes WATER Institute, in cooperation with Wisconsin Sea Grant, will take over the responsibility for supporting this initiative September 1, 2005.

AREF Phone Hotline (414-430-0326): The AREF phone service was established to provide the industry in the NCR with a personal response to address questions that cannot be answered using the Web site, and to address possible Aquaculture emergencies. Questions related to AREF expertise are answered directly. If a question cannot be answered directly, the inquirer is directed to someone on the multidisciplinary Ateam of experts who specializes in the specific field in question. The phone is answered Monday-Friday from 7:00 AM- 4:00 PM CST, with voice mail available for calls outside of these hours.

To develop awareness of the availability of the AREF Web site and phone service A hotline, over 1,200 colored post cards announcing these services were mailed to NCR aquaculturists. Since its inception, usage of the AREF Web site has been tracked by AWebilizer software. During the second year of the project, the Web site was visited more than 11,000 times. The AREF phone hotline and e-mail have been a valuable communication resource for practicing and prospective regional aquaculturists.

OBJECTIVE 2

To facilitate communication within and between state associations, the AREF Web site contains contact information of each of

the existing state aquaculture industry associations for the 12 state NCR, and links to existing state association Web sites. Contact information for the state aquaculture coordinators and pertinent regulatory agency contacts is also posted. The ready availability of this information is intended to assist communication and to support the state associations. The availability of these services was communicated to the North Central Regional Aquaculture Center (NCRAC) Industry Advisory Council (IAC) and association officers. A presentation updating the AREF project was given to the Wisconsin Aquaculture Association on March 12, 2004 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. A PowerPoint presentation was given to the Michigan Aquaculture Association at their annual meeting on February 11, 2005 in Lansing, Michigan. The presentation highlighted the AREF Web site and the benefits it has on the regional aquaculture industry. A similar presentation was given to a joint meeting of the Nebraska Aquaculture Association and the Nebraska Sandhills Yellow Perch Cooperative on February 26, 2005 in Kearney, Nebraska. In addition, a presentation entitled AYellow Perch Production and Costs: Case Studies of Three Wisconsin RASs was given to the Wisconsin Aquaculture Association at their annual meeting in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin on March 11, 2005.

OBJECTIVE 3

The AREF Web site currently is organized to provide easily accessed information on inquires concerning appropriate NCR aquaculture species, various rearing systems, and individual state contacts. In addition, it has a general aquaculture topic category for topics that do not fit into the previously mentioned categories (effluents, water chemistry, marketing, etc.). It also provides a calendar of aquaculture events, links to

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other Web-based aquaculture information sources and organizations, and e-mail and phone contacts. The Web site is highly dynamic and updated continuously with the addition of current aquaculture information.

OBJECTIVE 4

In an effort to support state aquaculture associations (Objective 2) and disseminate current and beneficial aquaculture research to the industry, a Yellow Perch Aquaculture Workshop[®] was organized and conducted in Kearney, Nebraska on February 26, 2005. The workshop was part of a joint annual meeting of the Nebraska Aquaculture Association and the Nebraska Sandhills Yellow Perch Cooperative. Some of the topics covered were: Development and Maintenance of Yellow Perch Broodstock; Intensive Aquaculture Technology for Yellow Perch; and Yellow Perch Production and Costs: Case Studies of Three Wisconsin RASs. Attendees at this conference included representatives from Nebraska, Iowa, and Kansas.

OBJECTIVE 5

In December 2004, 1,277 NCR aquaculture producers (including all NCRAC IAC members) were sent a 10-question survey asking their opinions on regional aquaculture needs and constraints. The results were presented at the IAC meeting prior to the NCRAC Annual Program Planning Meeting on February 11, 2005. The results are also posted (<http://www.ncaref.org/Producer%20Survey.htm>) on the AREF Web site. In addition, the members of the NCRAC Technical Committees (Research and Extension) were asked (1) What do you feel is the most important issue related to the needs of the NCR aquaculture industry to make that industry advance and be profitable and (2) What do you feel is the most important issue

related to the needs of your local aquaculture industry to make that industry advance and be profitable? The results of the surveys provided valuable information that is very relevant to regional industry needs, and can be used to benefit most producers. Additionally, these results will be important in crafting subsequent aquaculture surveys.

IMPACTS

- < Usage of the AREF Web site, which provides the most current aquaculture information for the NCR, has steadily increased to more than 1,000 visits per month since its inception in January 2004.
- < Results from the producer opinion surveys, questions and comments to the phone hotline, and discussions at aquaculture workshops and conferences have increased the awareness of regional aquaculture needs. By further examination and addressing these needs, the aquaculture industry in the NCR should advance at a much greater pace than in the past.
- < AREF program clientele have improved access to information of direct use to their enterprises. The AREF Web site and phone hotline will continue to be active. These two resources are being successfully utilized by prospective and established fish farmers.

RECOMMENDED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

The needs of the regional aquaculture industry must be identified on a continual basis. Industry needs change rapidly. Industry opinion surveys should continue to be distributed and analyzed. This is the most direct and productive approach to assess current regional industry needs. In addition, direct interaction with the NCRAC/IAC and Technical Committees is

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necessary to facilitate their preparation for annual planning meetings and to make sure new research projects reflect NCR industry needs. Regional conferences should continue to be organized. They allow the most up-to-date research to be shared between NCRAC researchers and regional aquaculturists. Conferences and workshops should also be provided more often to rural areas of the NCR (North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas) and areas with less active aquaculture associations.

Starting in September 2005, the UW-Great Lakes WATER Institute and Wisconsin Sea Grant will provide the necessary resources to continue the AREF project and provide aquaculture services to the North Central and Great Lakes regions.

PUBLICATIONS, MANUSCRIPTS, OR PAPERS PRESENTED

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

SUPPORT

YEAR	NCRAC- USDA FUNDING	OTHER SUPPORT					TOTAL SUPPORT
		UNIVER- SITY	INDUSTRY	OTHER FEDERAL	OTHER	TOTAL	
2003-05	\$100,000	\$18,046		\$3,913	\$18,046	\$40,005	\$140,005
TOTAL	\$100,000	\$18,046		\$3,913	\$18,046	\$40,005	\$140,005