

## **ALIGNING U.S. FEDERAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS FOR MARINE FINFISH AQUACULTURE WITH EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES**

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Marine finfish aquaculture research in the United States has a history that traces back to the 1970s with work on several Gulf Coast species and salmon. Other species are now farm-raised either commercially or experimentally, including Pacific threadfin, red drum, flounder, cobia, amberjack, pompano, sea bass, cod, and Atlantic halibut. The commercial culture potential of these and other marine fish species is driven, in part, by limited supplies from capture fisheries, projected profitability, and increasing demand due to population growth and scientific evidence of the public health benefits of consuming seafood

The speakers will update the conference on recent federal initiatives including efforts to assess research capabilities, set research priorities, foster international collaboration, and make best use of research funding mechanisms. The presentation will be followed by a discussion with the conference participants.

With many promising marine finfish species being considered for culture and with the limited availability of research dollars, there is a need for prioritization, strategic coordination, and innovative partnerships. From a commercial perspective, the success and rate of technology adoption is directly dependent upon economic incentives within an enabling regulatory environment. Marine finfish technology in the US continues to achieve pioneering advances. But private investments in marine aquaculture production in the U.S. have not kept pace with numerous other countries. Public-funded research in the U.S. is driven by a broad constituency in which marine finfish is a subset among many other diverse sectors of aquaculture. Priorities can be anticipated to shift as new commercial opportunities and needs evolve.

Because of the scope and complexity of research challenges and the designated roles of various federal agencies related to marine finfish no single federal department or program has all of the needed resources and service programs. Although current funding from both intramural and extramural federal research programs occurs across a broad portfolio, future advancements will benefit from strengthened public-private partnerships and collaboration from diverse agency programs. Business-sensitive criteria for species selection and research priorities will be critical to the success of land-based, near-shore, and offshore production.

This presentation and associated discussion are part of an ongoing reassessment of federally supported research, extension and technology programs from diverse agency portfolios that collectively and collaboratively advance marine finfish production systems in critical partnerships with states, academia and the private sector.

Meryl Broussard, Donald Freeman, William Wolters, and Maxwell Mayeaux at USDA and Andy Lazur and Kevin Amos at NOAA contributed to this presentation.