



# U.S. AQUACULTURE PRIORITIES

## Create an Aquaculture Advisory Capacity

We request the creation of an aquaculture advisory capacity at the Secretarial level to inform agency decision making as suggested in companion legislation, H.R. 3951 / S. 2211, Sustaining Healthy Ecosystems, Livelihoods and Local Seafood Act. The advisory body should report directly to the Secretary to ensure all-inclusive oversight across all mission areas charged with implementing USDA freshwater and marine aquaculture programs, and serve as a "front door" to the Department by continually improving customer service and technical assistance to the aquaculture community.

The following priorities should be an initial focus of an advisory body and empower USDA to better serve the aquaculture community:

- ➔ Expand aquaculture farm eligibility within USDA programs and establish a definition of aquaculture that is inclusive of all commodity types.
- ➔ Create USDA Organic Standards for aquaculture products that will increase domestic value and require foreign products labeled as organic under foreign standards to meet U.S. standards.
- ➔ Advocate for the amendment of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to provide the Secretary of Agriculture with permit writing authority for agricultural livestock and aquaculture.
- ➔ Reconsider the writing of a new National Aquatic Animal Health Plan that currently invites authorship by federal agencies with no import only Congressional authority over farmed aquatic animals. The National Plan should not be influenced by federal agencies that do not have a congressional mandate.
- ➔ Recognize drought as an eligible adverse natural event covered by the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey-bees and Farm-raised Fish Program.
- ➔ Eliminate the recently imposed costly fees and delayed approvals by Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services, to export live farmed aquatic animals.
- ➔ Expand eligibility to seaweed farmers through the research, technology transfer, and economic development programs already available to terrestrial crops.