

Growing a Robust Seafood Industry

Background

The Texas seafood industry supports the economies of coastal Texas communities, but economic analyses show that the industry could greatly expand: The industry was heavily damaged by Hurricane Harvey and other catastrophic events, and, at present, about 90% of U.S. seafood is imported.

Program Description

Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMUCC) propose a collaborative program that will:

- Develop breeding programs for shrimp, oysters, finfish, crabs, and other important marine species.
- Create innovative methods for aquaculture production to ensure supply stability.
- Improve the health of Texas' coastal waters by linking aquaculture systems with natural marine environments and working with environmental organizations such as Texas OneGulf.
- Ensure consumer satisfaction by drawing on the expertise of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's consumer-based programs such as Healthy Texas, Dinner Tonight, and Path to the Plate.
- Give Texas a competitive boost in diverse seafood production and market saturation.

Major Accomplishments in the Next Two Years

- Increase the production of seafood products from Texas bays and estuaries.
- Deliver a more diverse and nutritious supply of seafood to consumers in Texas and beyond.
- Improve the Texas Gulf Coast economy.
- Leverage additional funds from external sources to expand aquaculture programs in the state.

Exceptional Item Request
FY 2020–21
\$4 Million

Objective

Innovate seafood breeding and production to improve the health of Texas coastal waters, strengthen the Texas seafood industry, and bolster resilience of coastal communities.



Problem

Unmet Demand for Texas Seafood

- Hurricane Harvey and other events have heavily damaged the Texas seafood industry.
- Texas shrimp and oyster fisheries contribute about \$460 million to the economy per year, but about 90% of U.S. seafood is imported, resulting in a \$14 billion trade deficit.

Solution

Innovating Texas Seafood Production

With adequate funding, AgriLife Research and TAMUCC can produce research advances to enhance Texas seafood breeding and production. The partners have:

- Decades of combined expertise in Texas aquaculture.
- A history of successful collaborations.
- Core missions of solving problems, developing technologies, and applying technologies.

The requested funds will help upgrade aquaculture facilities and capabilities, support development of intellectual property, and establish a competitive aquaculture seed-grant program. The seed grants will help obtain additional funding from federal agencies, corporations, and other external sources.

Widespread External Support

The proposed seafood breeding and production program has garnered local support along the Texas Gulf Coast as well as support from numerous organizations and commercial seafood producers:

- Coastal Conservation Association
- Lower Colorado River Authority
- Numerous Gulf Coast communities
- Numerous seafood producers
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- Texas Sea Grant
- Texas Restaurant Association
- Texas General Land Office



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Texas A&M AgriLife

What is AgriLife? It's a simple word for a diverse organization. With teaching, research, extension education, laboratory, and forestry facilities throughout Texas, we serve people of all ages and backgrounds. Led by Patrick J. Stover, vice chancellor for agriculture and life sciences, Texas A&M AgriLife includes the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Texas A&M Forest Service, and the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory.