



Maine Sea Grant recognized for seaweed aquaculture outreach, research

October 27, 2016

The National Sea Grant Extension Assembly selected Maine Sea Grant as the recipient of the 2016 Superior Outreach Programming Award, presented at the biennial meeting of the National Sea Grant Network on Oct. 13 in Newport, Rhode Island.

Sarah Redmond, former marine Extension associate with Sea Grant and University of Maine Cooperative Extension, received the award for her efforts to develop a seaweed aquaculture industry in Maine. Redmond's award reflects her long-held desire to become a seaweed farmer, her Sea Grant-funded graduate research on seaweed aquaculture at the University of Connecticut, and a return to her home state, where the majority of wild harvest fisheries are limited, and there is growing interest in local, sustainable, "super" foods such as kelp, a native species of seaweed or marine macroalgae.

From 2012–16, Redmond worked with Sea Grant staff in Maine and throughout the Northeast, as well as with UMaine researcher Susan Brawley and the seaweed industry to develop new nursery cultivation techniques for native seaweed species at UMaine's Center for Cooperative Aquaculture Research in Franklin, Maine. Her outreach included co-founding the Maine Seaweed Festival and the Seaweed Scene research conference; technology exchange with the aquaculture industries in Ireland, Hawaii, Korea and Japan; and working with Maine companies and restaurants to develop new products incorporating Maine seaweed.

Redmond now is launching her own seaweed aquaculture business.

At the biennial meeting of the National Sea Grant Network, Redmond's graduate research on kelp and Maine's efforts to realize a commercial seaweed aquaculture industry received a second award. The Sea Grant Association gave its Research to Application Award to the Maine, New Hampshire and Connecticut Sea Grant programs for the region's successful seaweed research and outreach portfolio. The other recipients from UMaine include Dana Morse, Susan Brawley and Nicholas Brown.

Three decades of research on the basic physiology, genetics and growth of economically important seaweeds served as the basis for recent research advancements in nursery and cultivation techniques and new applications. Through partnerships with Ocean Approved LLC of Portland, Maine and the Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science and Technology Education Center in Connecticut, culture systems were piloted and seeded kelp was grown on longlines near Bangs Island, Maine and in Long Island Sound. New processing methods and product forms are being evaluated and tested in all three states.

"The award recipients exemplify the strength and value of integrated research, outreach and education programs supported by the Sea Grant network, and clearly demonstrate the importance of translational research in supporting science-based management" said Sylvain DeGuisse, president of the Sea Grant Association.

Team members named in the award nomination are Charles Yarish and Jang Kim of the University of Connecticut and Connecticut Sea Grant; John Curtis of Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science and Technology Education Center; Nicholas Brown and Susan Brawley of UMaine; Sarah Redmond and Dana Morse of Maine Sea Grant; Chris Neefus and Lindsay Green of the University of New Hampshire and New Hampshire Sea Grant; Amanda LaBelle of the Island Institute; and Anoushka Concepcion and Peg Van Patten of Connecticut Sea Grant.

The Newport meeting marked the 50th anniversary of the National Sea Grant College Program, signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in October 1966. UMaine received the first Sea Grant funding in 1971.

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