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**NOAA announces aquaculture initiative to enable domestic seafood production and create jobs in coastal communities**

NOAA's administrator today will announce a new aquaculture initiative to help meet our country's growing demand for seafood, while creating jobs and restoring healthy ecosystems.

The agency's Aquaculture Technology Transfer Initiative will foster public-private partnerships on regional projects that showcase innovative sustainable practices, jump start private sector investments, and create employment opportunities in coastal communities.

NOAA Administrator Dr. Jane Lubchenco will announce the initiative following meetings at the Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute in Carlsbad, Calif., a private research institute north of San Diego with extensive aquaculture research facilities. At Hubbs-SeaWorld, she will tour the facility and meet with aquaculture practitioners, researchers and other partners.

"Aquaculture is a critical component to meeting increasing global demand for seafood," said Lubchenco, who is also under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere. "Job creation is a major focus of this administration. This initiative provides an opportunity to support innovation and growth in the private aquaculture sector, resulting in a healthy, local seafood supply and job growth at our working waterfronts."

In June, the Department of Commerce and NOAA released national policies that support sustainable marine aquaculture in the United States. Americans import about 84 percent of their seafood, half of which is from aquaculture. The U.S. trade deficit in seafood currently exceeds \$10 billion and continues to grow.

"Aquaculture can be a significant contributor to a 'blue-green' economy that both contributes to and benefits from healthy oceans and coasts," Lubchenco said.

As part of this initiative, NOAA will work with its partners in the private sector, academia, government and communities to advance technology, monitor performance indicators, and showcase best practices and market-based standards. The initiative will be implemented with the active involvement of NOAA's regional offices and science centers, Sea Grant Extension, and other federal, state, local and non-governmental partners. Jointly, NOAA and its partners will identify and pursue projects that promote sustainable domestic marine aquaculture. American expertise and innovation has played a significant role in the development of aquaculture in foreign countries. The DOC and NOAA policies and this new initiative will promote sustainable practices and developments in the U.S., so that American ingenuity can be applied here at home.

The domestic aquaculture industry, both freshwater and marine, currently supplies about five percent of the seafood consumed in the U.S. The cultivation of shellfish, such as oysters, clams and mussels, comprises about two-thirds of U.S. marine aquaculture. Salmon and shrimp aquaculture contribute about 25 percent and 10 percent, respectively. Current production takes place mainly on land, in ponds and in coastal state waters.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and our other [social media channels](#).

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