

## **WI AQUAPONICS MULTI-AGENCY SUPPORT GROUP**

November 27, 2012 Discussion

USDA –Farm Service Agency

1012 Vine St, Union Grove, WI

**Participants:** USDA-FSA, UWEX, NRCS, LCD, DATCP, DNR, Water Council  
Contact Spreadsheet attached.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss how Federal, State and County regulatory, funding & technical assistance staff can support aquaponic farming in Wisconsin; *especially in urban areas*.

**Future purpose:** We want to be able to offer local aquaponics contacts an easy to use method of getting Federal, State & County regulatory, funding and technical assistance in the future.

To further this purpose we have scheduled monthly conference calls to update ourselves on the latest regulatory, funding and technical assistance available to local contacts and then get this information out to the local contacts and aquaponic associations as efficiently as possible.

We want the aquaponics industry to succeed and grow in Wisconsin.

The next conference call is scheduled **for January 15, 2013 from 10 – 11am**.

Christine Lilek – WDNR Agribusiness Sector Specialist will obtain a WISLINE call in number for the call. Please email or call Christine at [Christine.Lilek@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Christine.Lilek@wisconsin.gov) or at (920) 387-7898, if you wish to join the call.

### **TOPICS DISCUSSED:**

EDUCATION

TALENT

TECHNOLOGY

ECONOMICS

RESOURCE

FARMS & SUPPLIERS

### **EDUCATION**

Education options are expanding into many different areas:

- DATCP has a successful on-line fish health training course,
- colleges are now offering courses on Aquaponics,
- Primary and Secondary schools are starting their own aquaponics demonstration farms and teaching urban teachers on agriculture,
- Milwaukee has created plans for an aquaculture center, and
- the National Aquaponics Conference will be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 2013.

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Links are provided for these educational opportunities:

Fish Health On-Line Training

<http://vetmedce.vetmed.wisc.edu/fhm/>

College Courses

<http://www.uwsp.edu/urc/news/Pages/AquaponicsCourse12.aspx>

<http://www.ansci.wisc.edu/research/aquaculture/index.htm>

Urban Ag Center

<http://www.mkeurbanag.org/UrbanAquacultureCenter/HomePage>

HACCP Training

<http://seafood.ucdavis.edu/haccp/training/WI.HTM>

Karen Green, MPS 6-12 STEM Science Teaching Specialist, Milwaukee Grade Schools

<http://www5.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/dept/superintendent/2012/09/mps-teachers-students-share-aquaponics-successes-at-international-conference/>

St Vincent High School Aquaponics Project

<http://www.seagrant.wisc.edu/Home/AboutUsSection/PressRoom/Details.aspx?PostID=1584>

Industry Conferences

**2013** Aquaponics Association Conference will be held in **Milwaukee**, Wisconsin.

<http://aquaponicsassociation.org/>

## TALENT

We were pleased to hear that Wisconsin is listed as one of the top three aquaponic farming experts in the world. Hawaii and Australia are the other two top performers. We have the talent in this State to develop this industry in homes, schools, service buildings, restaurants, and commercial farms. The Federal, State and County contacts have training, regulatory assistance, funding and technical support that can make this happen in Wisconsin. A few links that list our combined talents are listed below:

Federal

<http://afsic.nal.usda.gov/aquaculture-and-soilless-farming/aquaponics>

State

[http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Fish\\_Farms/index.aspx](http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Fish_Farms/index.aspx)

County

<http://fyi.uwex.edu/news/2011/08/03/three-aquaculture-workshops-planned/>

[http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Land\\_and\\_Water\\_Conservation/Land\\_and\\_Water\\_Conservation\\_Directory/index.aspx](http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Land_and_Water_Conservation/Land_and_Water_Conservation_Directory/index.aspx)

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### Farms

[https://secure.wisconsinaquaculture.com/Info\\_on\\_WI\\_Farm\\_Raised\\_Fish.cfm](https://secure.wisconsinaquaculture.com/Info_on_WI_Farm_Raised_Fish.cfm)

### System Designers

<http://aquaponics.com/> ,

### Non-Profits

Wisconsin Aquaculture Association [www.wisconsinaquaculture.com](http://www.wisconsinaquaculture.com)

Wisconsin Aquaculture Extension: North Central Aquaculture Regional Extension Facilitator

[www.ncaref.org/index.html](http://www.ncaref.org/index.html)

UW-Stevens Point - Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facility [www.uwsp.edu/cls/aquaculture/](http://www.uwsp.edu/cls/aquaculture/)

## **TECHNOLOGY**

There are challenges to becoming an aquaponics farmer. Our group hopes to make the regulatory, funding and sustainability of this type of farming easier in the future, but there are still the challenges of energy, water and waste handling. We need to support new technology that helps use less energy, recirculates and treats water more efficiently and recycles and reuses waste from farming. Some of the recent developments in these technology areas are listed below:

<http://www.aquaponicshq.com/forums/alternative-energy/5953-alternative-energy-ideas.html>

<http://aquaponicsassociation.org/2012-conference-speakers/>

The group has agreed to collect the most current achievements in technology and share them with the Wisconsin Aquaponics community.

## **ECONOMICS**

The group wants to help make aquaponic farming a sustainable business in Wisconsin. In order to do that we need to provide: an economic model for business start-ups, loans/grants, community economic development support, marketing resources, and insurance options.

### Profitability

We discussed the need for an Urban and also a RURAL economic model, in order to predict if aquaponics will be profitable in Wisconsin. We discussed the potential for asking the Wisconsin Small Business Development Association to help with these models. Contacts have also been made with UW-Whitewater and County Economic Development Organizations.

### Loans & Grants

Both low interest loans are available to the aquaponics farming sector. Carol Nagel – Senior Farm Loan Officer believes that the new USDA Microloans will be a real benefit to the aquaponics farm.

<http://fyi.uwex.edu/foodbin/2012/10/08/ag-grants-workshops/>

<http://www.calfandheifer.org/news/95088/USDA-Creates-New-Microloan-Program-For-Small-Farms.htm>

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### **Economic Development**

State, county and municipal economic development organizations exist throughout Wisconsin and are primed to help with farming and food processing developments.

<http://www.gdi-solutions.com/directory/edo/wisconsin.htm>

### **Marketing**

Marketing the value added benefits of aquaponic farm products are crucial for the success of aquaponic farming in Wisconsin. The City of Racine is promoting Wisconsin's entire aquaculture industry in the tri-state region around Chicago with the help of Wisconsin's Work Force Development Corporation.

2012 Legislation (Act 207) provided a top level announcement for aquaponic industry in the state by encouraging existing farms to invest in expansion and spurring growth in new start up farms; this will contribute to more aquaculture production, increase jobs and the state's economy. For more specifics on Act 207, go to <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2011/related/acts/207> .

2012 Wisconsin Aquaculture Day was held on July 21 this year and was covered by press releases and radio & television stations.

### **Insurance**

USDA representatives explained the past benefits of the non-insured insurance program and how it can help aquaponic farmers.

[http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/newsReleases?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=pfs&newstype=prfactsheet&type=detail&item=pf\\_20110830\\_distr\\_en\\_nap.html](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/newsReleases?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=pfs&newstype=prfactsheet&type=detail&item=pf_20110830_distr_en_nap.html)

## **RESOURCES**

Aquaponic farming can access and enhance the natural and human resources in Wisconsin and throughout the world. Brownfield developments near areas of waste to energy sources may actually enhance the abandoned properties in Wisconsin. Reusing abandoned warehouses as growing centers near methane production areas such as landfills or methane digesters foster a closed cycle life for buildings and energy use. Aquaponic facilities in urban areas (as well as rural areas) can protect & enhance the wildlife and provide for a sustainable source of fresh food for people. This in turn raises the value of the property and the neighborhood. Agency regulations and requirements can also provide tools to help protect and enhance the aquaponic industry. Many of the agencies have developed web pages for aquaponic industry assistance.

### **Land Reuse**

<http://www.mkeurbanag.org/UrbanAquacultureCenter/ThePlan>

### **Land Conservation**

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/130096388.html>

<http://datcp.wi.gov/uploads/Environment/pdf/ar-pub-119.pdf>

### **Regulations**

USDA <http://afsic.nal.usda.gov/aquaculture-and-soilless-farming/aquaponics>  
<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/aquaculture.cfm>

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DATCP [http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Fish\\_Farms/Publications/index.aspx](http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Fish_Farms/Publications/index.aspx)

DNR <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/fishing/aquaculture/index.html>

### Sustainability

Food, Jobs, Community & Property Development

<http://inwisconsin.com/blog/2012/08/20/agri-view-column/>

## **AQUAPONIC FARMS & SUPPLIERS**

### Demonstration

Sweet Water, Milwaukee, WI

Nelson and Pade, Inc., Montello, WI 53949

### Pilot Projects

Grow Local LLC, Neenah, WI

### Family Farms

Natural Green Farms, Racine WI

### Production Farms

Growing Power, Milwaukee, WI

Aqua Terra Farms, Bristol, WI

Future Farm, Baldwin, WI

### Suppliers

[http://www.indianafishfarming.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&catid=34%253Aworkshops&id=54%253Asuppliers&Itemid=66](http://www.indianafishfarming.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=34%253Aworkshops&id=54%253Asuppliers&Itemid=66)

<https://www.was.org/shopping/shopdisplaycategories.asp>