



*For immediate release*

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## **Boost Your Summer Sales with Safe, Sustainable U.S. Farm-Raised Fish and Shellfish**

During the summer, people are spending more time outdoors and want light, great tasting meals that are produced in a safe and environmentally-sound manner. One way to meet your customers' needs and expectations is to feature more U.S. farm-raised fish and shellfish on your menu. In addition to providing great tasting meal options, aquaculture also provides other ways to enjoy summer including the production of baitfish and fish to stock recreational ponds, lakes and streams.

When you buy product that was raised in the United States, you can be assured that it was grown in a safe and sustainable manner. All U.S. seafood processors and packers comply with the requirements of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Program. The program identifies potential hazards and develops strategies to help ensure that they do not occur. When manned space flights became a reality, the government and the U.S. food industry developed the HACCP approach as the best possible way to ensure food safety beyond earth's atmosphere. HACCP is a tried and true system.

In the U.S., very few drugs and chemicals have been approved for use with aquatic animals. Before any drug is approved, it undergoes rigorous testing and it must be clearly demonstrated that it will not harm the environment or public health.

U.S. farm-raised oysters, clams, and mussels are monitored by the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC) in cooperation with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. State agencies administer a certification program requiring all wholesale shellfish dealers to handle, process, and ship shellfish under sanitary conditions, and maintain records verifying that the shellfish were harvested from approved waters. Growing waters are tested on a regular basis and shellfish can only be harvested from certified waters. Look for a tag on the shellfish that you purchase. The tag indicates the date and place of harvest as well as information about the harvester.

To ensure that U.S. fish and shellfish are grown in an environmentally safe and sustainable manner, federal agencies including the Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and FDA oversee the production of aquatic organisms. Individual states often establish additional management practices that deal with water quality, wetlands protection, wastewater treatment, water supply, non-native species, and fish health programs.

(more)

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The U.S. wild harvest industry works with government and others to carefully manage our seafood resources and help ensure that the bounty of our oceans is available for future generations. Farm-raised fish and shellfish supplements wild resources and reduces the fishing pressure on wild stocks while providing the option of enjoying fish and shellfish as a regular part of the diet.

The production of oysters, clams, and mussels helps to maintain environmental quality. Algae grow very rapidly during the summer and use a great deal of the oxygen in the water. Because shellfish feed on algae, they can help keep the ecosystem system in balance so that more oxygen is available for other organisms. In addition, because of the three-dimensional structure of their shells, they provide habitats and hiding places for other animals. This adds to biodiversity which is a cornerstone of a healthy ecosystem.

Many environmental organizations place U.S. farm-raised fish and shellfish on their “Best Seafood Choices” lists. U.S. farm-raised fish and shellfish are good choices for the environment and, because prices and supply are stable, they can provide a good alternative for your menu.

For additional information on farm-raised products and recipes, visit the National Aquaculture Association website at [www.thenaa.net](http://www.thenaa.net).

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