



SUGAR KELP

Sources: Michael Chamber, NH Sea Grant, 2017.

WHY KELP

Wild kelp has been harvested in New England for centuries. However, the majority of seaweed eaten in the US is farmed and imported from Asia. Kelp farming in the Northeast is a relatively new industry, with shellfish farmers growing kelp in the winter as a way to diversity their business and provide year-round employment for aquaculture workers.

ABOUT KELP

- ◆ Healthy; high in calcium, iron and other vitamins and minerals
- ◆ Supports productive coastal habitats
- ◆ A local food product
- ◆ An economic benefit for aquaculture growers and the local economy
- ◆ Potential for a multitude of uses: food, biofuel, and feed products



For questions, comments and more information, please contact:

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Kelp On Your Plate

Understanding kelp farming and its market potential in the Northeast



Source: Honest-food.net, 2017.



THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF OCEANOGRAPHY



DISCOVERING KELP MARKETS

The Coastal Resources Center and Rhode Island Sea Grant at URI want to better understand the kelp aquaculture industry and its market potential in the Northeastern U.S. (from New York to Maine). We will be conducting surveys, interviews and focus groups with experts in various parts of the existing and potential farmed kelp supply chain, to describe current market distribution for kelp in the region and discover potential new markets for this product.

KELP & REGIONAL AQUACULTURE

Throughout the Northeast, coastal farmers grow a wide range of products including finfish, crustaceans, shellfish, and sea vegetables, such as kelp, that support domestic and foreign markets. Most of the recent growth in aquaculture has been in shellfish. Kelp can be grown during the winter season, to provide an alternative source of employment and revenue for shellfish growers during the slow season for shellfish.

AQUACULTURE IN THE NORTHEAST

- ◊ In the U.S., 35% is in the shellfish industry (i.e. clams, mussels, oysters) valued at \$323 million/year
- ◊ In New England, shellfish aquaculture is estimated at \$45-50 million/year
- ◊ Total cultured shellfish landings have reached \$143 million/year, supporting several thousands of jobs in rural coastal areas.
- ◊ In Rhode Island, aquaculture is one of the fastest growing enterprises, with a 98.3% increase in value between 2012 and 2015.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS & MARKETS

Kelp production and consumption can help meet the region-wide goal of sourcing 50% of the region's food from the Northeast by 2060. But, we need to determine where supply meets demand for this healthy, sustainable, and local product.

The current demand for kelp in the region is unknown and in order for growers to supply the market adequately, we are helping to understand the potential demand for different forms of kelp. Then, we will help growers determine how to grow kelp to reach different types of consumer demand.

WE NEED YOUR INPUT

- ◊ Have you ever eaten any kind of seaweed before?
- ◊ How was the seaweed prepared?
- ◊ Did you like it?
- ◊ How interested are you in trying new seaweed food products?
- ◊ Where would you buy kelp? Farmers markets, restaurants, grocery stores, sushi bars, oyster bars



Sources: FAO, Fisheries & Aquaculture Dept., 2013.



Sources: (top and center) Cindy West, 2017; (bottom left) Paleoveganista.com, 2014; (bottom right) Michael Chambers, NH Sea Grant, 2017.