

Third Quarterly Report to the Legislature

Mar. 28, 2016

Aquaculture and Fisheries Program

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Overview: The Department and Center are engaged in numerous academic, research and extension activities to address Center goals. The first round of Spring 2016 inspections is underway in the APHIS-approved lab in Lonoke and things are proceeding as planned. An invitation-only viewing of an inspection is planned for legislators on Mar. 29, 2016. UAPB administrators and the Center Director met with Arkansas Agriculture Secretary Wes Ward, and the new State Aquaculture Coordinator, Mark Stoll, to discuss opportunities for interaction and collaboration to support the Arkansas aquaculture industry.

Academic activities: All 2016 classes are underway, and preparations for the accreditation visit later this year are continuing. We are hosting numerous tours for elementary and high school students, and our recruiter travels frequently to participate in both in-state and out-of-state events. Faculty are being trained in new methods of advising, assessing and grading students to improve retention and graduation rates.

Research activities: January and February were extremely busy in terms of meeting participation. Faculty, staff and students attended and made presentations at meetings of the World Aquaculture Society, the American Fisheries Society, Catfish Farmers of Arkansas, Arkansas Bait and Ornamental Fish Growers Association, and others. The Department of Aquaculture and Fisheries also led the organization of the Rural Life Conference hosted by the School of Agriculture, Fisheries and Human Sciences at UAPB in early March. The conference was well attended and quite successful. This quarter is also an intensive period of grant proposal submission - our faculty are submitting both research and extension proposals to a variety of programs within USDA, as well as Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and are planning submissions to NSF and other funding agencies. We regularly gather information for research priorities from stakeholder groups within the areas of Aquaculture and Natural Fisheries, and have discussed some potential new areas of research - both basic and applied - to pursue.

Extension activities: The APHIS certification of the Lonoke lab has allowed UAPB to increase its overall services to the aquaculture industry. However, the main diagnostic lab space (approximately 1300 ft²) and some equipment that was previously dedicated to applied research in Lonoke have been sacrificed to accommodate the requirements of APHIS certification. There is still a strong need to conduct applied research at the Lonoke location. A preliminary assessment was conducted to estimate the cost of the facilities and equipment that would be needed to restore research capabilities at the Lonoke lab. The next step is to identify funding sources to support the expansion. UAPB Aquaculture Extension Specialists all over the state continue to conduct farm visits, conduct applied research, and provide information to producers and the public.

Professional Development: In conjunction with many of the meetings held this quarter, faculty served on professional Boards and participated in other leadership activities. Our students are also involved in many professional society activities where they gain national recognition. In conjunction with new positions and responsibilities, faculty and staff are pursuing opportunities to develop additional leadership capabilities.

Personnel: We hired a new Water Quality Professor, who is scheduled to begin May 15, 2016. We also hired a new Administrative Specialist II, who began work in January. We are currently interviewing applicants for a Professor of Aquaculture and Natural Fisheries Economics position. Interviews are also underway to identify permanent staff to support the Aquaculture Research Station. Job descriptions are being developed or refined for other open faculty and staff positions.

Further Information:

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