

For immediate release:

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Beginning Aquaculture workshops offered

UW-Extension specialists provide "reality check" for potential fish farmers

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Helping people make informed decisions about whether to go into the business of aquaculture, or fish farming, is the goal of three Beginning Aquaculture workshops to be held around the state in Aug., Sept. and Oct.

"These workshops are important for anyone who is interested, or thinks they want to start a fish farm. We give an overview of the work that's involved and help participants look at the markets before they make a commitment," says Ron Johnson, University of Wisconsin-Extension aquaculture outreach specialist.

The University of Wisconsin-Extension, UW-Stevens Point Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facility (UWSP NADF), and the Wisconsin Aquaculture Association (WAA) are sponsoring the events.

All workshops will be held on Saturdays, with the first scheduled on Aug. 8 at NADF in Red Cliff; the second on Sept. 19 at Coolwater Farms, Cambridge; and the third on Oct. 10 at Trout Palace, LaFarge.

The workshops run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and will introduce people to the Wisconsin aquaculture industry and provide an overview from a small business perspective on how to start and operate a fish farm.

Registration for the all-day workshops is \$35 per person and includes breaks, lunch, tour of the hosting fish farm, handouts and a one-year associate membership with WAA.

Workshops will begin with morning presentations and include sessions on: Wisconsin Aquaculture, Starting a Fish Farm, Economics/Business Planning and Rules and Regulations. Participants will receive packets of information and a CD containing the presentations and economic worksheets.

UW-Extension's three aquaculture specialists--Jim Held, Ron Johnson and Sarah Kaatz--will present the programs. Each workshop will also be sponsored by a WAA member fish farm: NADF in Red Cliff, Coolwater Farms in Cambridge, and Trout Palace in LaFarge.

Lunch will be provided and in the afternoon there will be a tour of the sponsoring farm, giving participants the opportunity to see firsthand how a fish farm operates and to ask questions of the owners.

The three workshops will incorporate farms that specialize in pond culture, raceways and Recirculation Aquaculture Systems (RAS) and are part of an ongoing series.

“We’ve had great success with the workshops we have done so far,” says Johnson. “They give people a good overview, good hands-on information and a reality check.”

Wisconsin’s aquaculture is a \$21 million industry, with over 125 fish farm businesses raising fish for food, stocking, bait and recreational fee fishing.

To register contact Cindy Johnson, Wisconsin Aquaculture Association, 715-373-2990 or email Cindy@WisconsinAquaculture.com