

Ventura Shellfish Enterprise: Implementing an integrative model for new shellfish aquaculture permitting and production in federal waters proximate to Ventura, California

R/AQ-141

[SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES AND SEAFOOD SUPPLY \(/FOCUS-AREAS/SAFE-AND-SUSTAINABLE-FISHERIES-AND-SEAFOOD-SUPPLY\)](#)

Start/End: October, 2018 to October, 2021

Increasing the supply of safe, sustainably produced domestic seafood is a priority for Sea Grant, NOAA and the Department of Commerce. The Ventura Shellfish Enterprise (VSE) is a multi-stakeholder initiative that seeks to permit and manage 20 100-acre leases for mussel farming consistent with this objective. Globally, bivalve shellfish culture has been very successful in producing high value seafood with limited environmental impacts. However, the current complexities and costs associated with the aquaculture permitting process represent a significant barrier to expansion of the industry in the US, and in California particularly. In this project, VSE seeks to address several regulatory and planning challenges that effectively limit the development of domestic marine shellfish culture.

The objectives of this project are to:

- Develop a technically sound and defensible strategy to successfully obtain all required government entitlements necessary to establish twenty 100-acre aquaculture sites in federal waters of the Santa Barbara Channel, proximate to Ventura Harbor;
- Implement this strategy and obtain the necessary permits and entitlements, and complete associated environmental review documents;
- Develop an effective monitoring and reporting program to monitor environmental impacts and evaluate project progress;
- Collaborate with NOAA and the Food and Drug Administration to ensure future landed product has a pathway for compliance with the National Shellfish Sanitation Program and Seafood Sanitation Inspection Program guidelines for shellfish grown in federal waters;
- Offer economies of scale to individual grower/producers to facilitate the participation of entities who might otherwise be precluded because of the significant regulatory process and costs associated with obtaining the required government approvals; and,
- Prepare grower/producers for successful farming of the growing areas through business planning, training, and technology transfer.



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