



# AQUACULTURE IN IOWA

## Economic Impact:

**\$3.8M**

in sales (2018)

As demand for seafood continues to increase, aquaculture, or farming in the water, is an environmentally responsible and especially efficient method of protein production and an option we must consider to complement our sustainably managed wild fisheries.

## What Types of Fish?

Channel catfish and largemouth bass are the most commonly grown fish, followed by smallmouth bass and bluegill. Iowa experiences cold winters, so this limits the farming of warmwater tilapia, and a few tilapia farms use indoor systems.

## The Most Sustainable Protein

The aquaculture industry utilizes science-based practices to produce farm-raised seafood in the most efficient way possible, which helps protect and preserve our natural resources in a changing climate. Finfish aquaculture is the most sustainable and efficient method of animal protein production. Further, technological advancements in feed production, using soy and microalgae oil, have led to the development of new plant-based feed solutions. Other forms of aquaculture like shellfish and seaweed farming require no feed inputs and act as filters to clean the ocean environment.

## How Does Aquaculture Address Food Security?

Food security and food safety start locally. U.S. aquaculture producers must adhere to strict environmental and product safety rules and regulations so that Iowans can be certain that the fish they're eating is safe. Up to 85% of the seafood consumed in the U.S. is imported, with 50% coming from overseas farms, so why not grow our own local food?

## State Aquaculture Businesses

In Iowa, aquaculture is another form of value-added agriculture. The cost of land, availability of good, clean water, and the availability of feed for aquaculture offer a great opportunity for Iowa to be a growing part of a robust agriculture industry.

- Eagle's Catch is in Ellsworth's industrial park along Interstate Highway 35 and is one of as many as 30 fish farms in Iowa producing tilapia, shrimp, or fish to stock ponds and rivers in the state. The farm's goal is to produce 5 million pounds of live tilapia a year and be the country's largest indoor fish farm. Eagle's Catch contributes \$36 million a year to the economy of the Hamilton County community of about 500 people.
- Located in Story City, Midland Co. is a land-based seafood company dedicated to raising sustainable, ethical, and delicious seafood. Using innovative Algae-Based™ RAS (recirculating aquaculture systems) technology, Midland Co. strives to be stewards of the environment as its shrimp are responsibly raised and are free of hormones, antibiotics, and chemicals.

## RESOURCES

[Iowa Department of Agriculture](#), [Aquatic Network](#)