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Maine aquaculture producers are given a seafood distribution guide

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Maine Aquaculture Association aims to help farmers get their products to market

The Maine Aquaculture Association (MAA) on Tuesday released a guide for aquaculture producers to understand potential distribution channels for their products and how to bring their products to market.

The first-ever **Maine Aquaculture Distribution Mapping Manual** (<https://maineaqua.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Maine-Aquaculture-Distribution-Mapping-Manual.pdf>) is a guide on how farmers can tap into the United States' \$7 billion retail seafood market. Much of the state's seafood supply is traditionally sold to restaurants, which were hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic. The manual includes input from more than 20 stakeholders, including seafood producers, wholesalers, distributors, restaurateurs, trucking companies, and others.

"As Maine's working waterfront continues to face new supply chain challenges, the industry and consumer demand keeps growing," said MAA Executive Director Sebastian Belle. "By nature, Maine's farm fishing families are open to navigating choppy waters when they need to. It's our collective responsibility to support their efforts to bring their product to market."

The manual, funded in partnership with FocusMaine, recommends that farmers, diversify sales



The Maine Aquaculture Association's new guide will inform producers about distribution channels and how to bring their products to market. Photo courtesy of MAA.

channels, including alternative distribution methods like direct-to-consumer sales, maintain strong relationships and keep product quality consistent.

"This manual is such a valuable tool," said Toni Small of Ice House Oysters in Port Clyde. "From online sales to pop-ups and farmer's markets, there are many routes to distribution. MAA walks us through the benefits and risks so we can make choices about where to put our efforts."

Maine's aquaculture industry currently represents nearly 200 farms and more than 700 farmers who produce finfish, shellfish and sea vegetables.

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