



Wisconsin Aquaculture Association

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For Immediate Release:

Wisconsin Aquaculture Association Celebrates Aquaculture Day in Wisconsin with the Fourth Annual State Wide Fish Farm Open House Saturday, July 16, 2011

The Wisconsin Aquaculture Association, along with member fish farms, is celebrating this day with their Fourth Annual State Wide Open House on Saturday, July 16, 2011. With the increase in public awareness of their food sources, the fish farmers of Wisconsin are opening their farms to the public, promoting Wisconsin aquaculture and explaining the importance of locally grown, fresh, safe fish. The fish farmers of Wisconsin are working together to encourage people to visit a local fish farm and learn firsthand about aquaculture, become more aware of the role commercial aquaculture plays in the state's economy, local communities, recreational opportunities and in providing a safe healthy food.

On April 26 of last year, the Wisconsin Senate and Assembly passed a joint resolution declaring the 3rd Saturday in July as Aquaculture Day. This resolution acknowledges aquaculture (fish farming) as an important agricultural industry in Wisconsin and having a sound environmental history using sustainable best management practices. Wisconsin currently has 2,314 registered fish farms, comprising 1,984 private farms with ponds, 125 business farms, 213 public fee fishing farms, 6 wholesale fish processing farms, and 95 farms processing fish for human consumption. Wisconsin's fish farmers contribute \$21 million to Wisconsin's economy through live bait, fee fishing, stocking and food fish production. Wisconsin is the largest seller/producer of aquaculture products in the Midwest with their products not only supplying gamefish and bait for recreational use, but their high quality food fish are offered in some of the top restaurants and stores in the Upper Midwest.

Throughout the state, eight fish farms will be open and include fee fishing and stocking operations, and aquaponics. Individual fish farms will offer free events such as farm tours, demonstrations, cooking demonstrations with recipes, and various talks. Some farms will also have fish products (fresh, smoked, and spreads) for sampling and sale or offer fee fishing - a fun time for the family and a great opportunity to buy fresh Wisconsin produced food from a local farmer. Learn about raising fish, various culture techniques, pond management and fish health programs or just have fun fishing! An added highlight will be a visit from Alice in Dairyland. Alice has stopped by one of our farms each year and this year Katie Wirkus, the 64th Alice in Dairyland, will be visiting Woods and Waters Enterprises in Juneau to talk to visitors about the importance of Wisconsin Aquaculture.

Aquaculture, or fish farming, is defined as the raising of aquatic organisms in controlled settings, and Wisconsin's private aquaculture dates back to 1856. Wisconsin fish farming is very diverse - raising trout, yellow perch, and bluegills for food; walleye, northern pike, muskie and bass for stocking, and minnows for bait. Wisconsin fish farmers take pride in providing fish that are veterinarian certified healthy and Wisconsin fish farms are Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia virus (VHS) free.

Americans consume almost 17 pounds of fish or seafood each year but over 80% of that is imported. Wisconsin fish farmers are raising safe, high quality, fresh fish on a farm near you. And based on tests conducted to date, there are no suggested restrictions on the consumption of Wisconsin farm-raised fish.

Who should attend: Everyone who loves to fish or eat fish, wants to know more about fish farming, and wants to see first hand what aquaculture is all about and anyone who wants to know where to buy Wisconsin raised fish.

Cost: There is no cost to visit the fish farm or for demonstrations or talks, individual fish farms will charge for fishing or purchase of their products.

Location: See listing for Wisconsin fish farms open for tours at www.WisconsinAquaculture.com, look under “Events” and download the list.

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