



[FEED SUSTAINABILITY \(/ADVOCATE/CATEGORY/FEED-SUSTAINABILITY\)](#)

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# From bench to belly: Driving supply-side solutions for the future of fish feed

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By Michael Tlusty, Ph.D.

## Invest in and support alternate feed ingredients to ensure aquaculture's future



Algae, as seen on this petri dish, is the source of one of the leading alternative feed ingredients for aquaculture feeds. Shutterstock image.

Disaster planning is a prudent practice for any business, and for governments. Aquaculture is not immune to disaster. Time and time again have we seen the collapse of burgeoning sectors, a trend that will continue into the future. These single-sector disasters usually involve disease (ISA in salmon in Chile, EMS in shrimp in Thailand) or natural phenomena (the Indonesian tsunami).



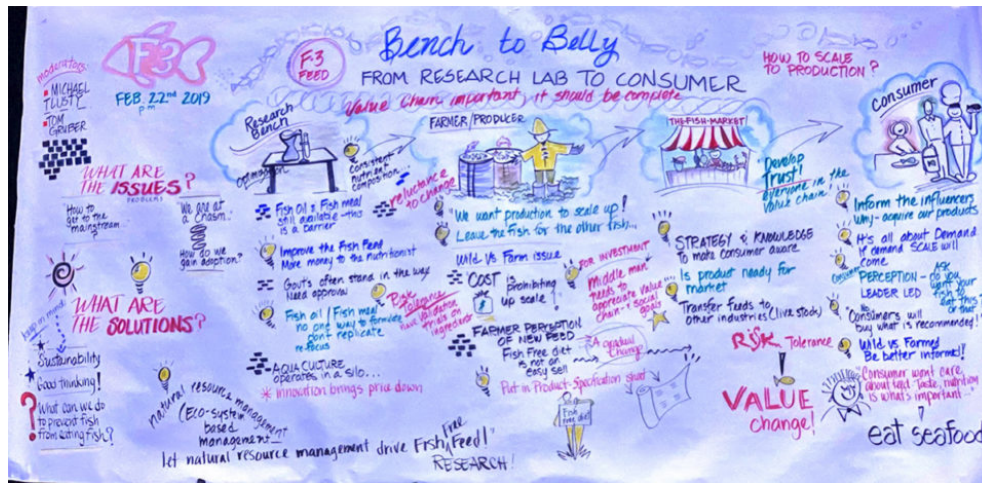


Fig. 2: The artistic rendition of the break out discussion for how to get more innovative feeds from “Bench to Belly.”

As shown in Fig. 2, a lot of great ideas floated to the top of the individual groups. A few of the overarching comments coming from multiple groups include:

- Most consumers don't care about feed. New innovations are adopted by influencers and the aquaculture-influencer audience needs to be identified to get products socially accepted.
- The flavor and nutrition of fish and shrimp fed alternative feed ingredients is important. Any new product to market has to be at minimum as good as existing products, and ideally has to taste better than conventional feed products.
- Alternate ingredients need to be able to scale and be of suitable cost. As we heard in the first breakout, ingredient companies have solutions at the ready, however, as long as low-cost-formulation is a strategy for feed creation, costs will dominate.
- Government regulations are still not conducive to making new ingredients available on the market in an expedient manner.

Above all else, aquaculture needs to tap into the existing market dynamics to get alternative feed ingredients to market. One way is to support sound ecosystem-based management for fisheries. In doing so, forage fishery harvests limits would be reduced to maintain ecosystem services. This would prevent overfishing, thus keeping a disaster from happening, while at the same time making the case that alternate ingredients are necessary.

A second way to tap into established market dynamics is to find retailers that value alternative feed ingredients and are willing to write contracts specifying the use of these ingredients.

Because of an uncertain future for ocean resources, and because aquaculture has an important place at the table for a food secure future, all of aquaculture – from laboratory research, to producer, to the markets, policy wonks and consumers – needs to make sure that there will be adequate resources to ensure production can grow to meet future global needs. Investment and support of alternate feed ingredients are the way to ensure a secure future for aquaculture.

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