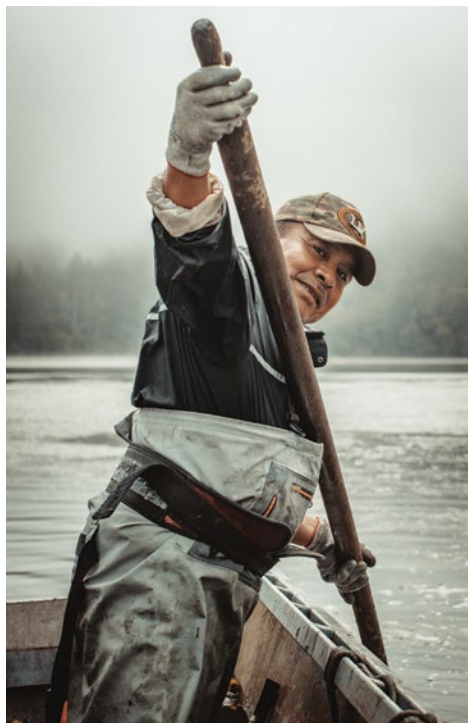




# OCEAN CLUSTER INITIATIVE TEAM NEWSLETTER

**Y1 IN REVIEW | 2022**

Capturing More Value from Oregon's Local Catch



## WHY WE DO THIS WORK

OCVA's Ocean Cluster Initiative is a data-driven, systems approach aimed at developing tactics to address challenges presented in Oregon Coast food community needs assessments.

Our Initiative uses a holistic, futurecasting lens to prioritize innovative efforts that support sustainable fisheries, restorative aquaculture (shellfish and seaweeds), climate mitigation, adaptation and resiliency, environmental stewardship, and blue economy systems.

Initial work is focused on food systems to realize meaningful lasting change in our coastal communities and beyond. Food can provide a conduit to bring diverse voices and perspectives to the table in an exchange of data, knowledge, traditional wisdom, innovation and culture.

In 2021 the Oregon Coast Visitors Association received a USDA Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) grant to fund projects that develop, coordinate, and expand regional food business enterprises. The goal of our project is to help make local (sea)food easier to find and buy.

## USDA LFPP OBJECTIVES

- 1** **ADD VALUE** to locally harvested Oregon seafood and aquaculture products through support of the Yaquina Lab facility (Newport Ocean Cluster) in Newport, Oregon to assist with coastal COVID response and recovery efforts. This project will benefit and encourage the development of value-added seafood and aquaculture products in our region.
- 2** **INCREASE AVAILABILITY** of Oregon seafood and aquaculture products by coordinating Regional Distribution Networks and Market Channels in collaboration with the Oregon Food Hub Network. This objective focuses on investigating and implementing more cost-effective means of transportation for food supply chains through back-haul, route optimization, and/or other operational efficiencies.
- 3** **STRENGTHEN CAPACITY** of Oregon food system partners to cultivate the regional economy through mid-tier value chain coordination. This objective will create a Project Coordination Team which will ensure that Objectives 1 and 2 are in alignment with other regional work, with an emphasis on developing tools, techniques or practices that can be rapidly adopted by neighboring regions and beyond.



## SHORTENING THE LOCAL SUPPLY CHAIN: QUICK FACTS

The goals of the **Ocean Cluster Initiative\*** are simple: “Keeping More Local Seafood Local” and “Making Local (Sea)food Easier to Find and Buy”, all in an effort to capture more value from our local catch.

**Consider this:** The Oregon Coast has a high rate of food insecurity overall, leaving us not well positioned for emergency preparedness in the event of catastrophe.

**90%** of the seafood consumed on the Oregon Coast is from distant domestic sources and foreign countries.

**\$105** million was the amount spent in 2021 importing of seafood from other parts of the world.

**\$840** million is spent annually on food and food services by visitors to the Oregon Coast.

**10%** increase in local seafood usage on the Oregon Coast would generate an additional \$90 million for local economies.

**\$252** million (est.) annual “Economic Leakage” most likely occurs from selling food that is not produced on the Oregon Coast.

**76%** reduction in seafood related carbon emissions could be accomplished by selling more of Oregon’s seafood locally.

**\*Funding Sources:** USDA Local Food Promotion Program for this project was made possible by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service through grant [21LFPPOR1029-00]. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA.

**Project Title:** Capturing Value by Keeping Local Seafood Local

**Project Duration:** Sept 30, 2021 - Sept 30, 2024

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Check out [OregonSeafare.com](https://OregonSeafare.com), a new industry facing website with current research and project updates

Follow us on Instagram and Facebook accounts [@OregonSeafare](https://www.instagram.com/OregonSeafare)

Sign up for our newsletter at [oregonseafare.com/newsletter](https://oregonseafare.com/newsletter)







## OBJECTIVE 1: ADD VALUE

This year is one to celebrate - 2022 was an intense year of discovery for our Ocean Cluster Initiative, and we have accomplished a lot together! Here's a taste of our work toward grant objectives and deliverables:

- One seafood business is actively working with the Food Innovation Center to create a new value-added food product from a waste byproduct, slated to launch in 2023.
- Created 15 videos highlighting the local seafood and aquaculture industry, as well as critical Oregon species, to be used for marketing by businesses and visitor bureaus.
- Launch an [Oregon Seafare YouTube channel](#) to host these videos. Our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Flickr](#) channels track social engagement.
- Provided RCTP funding to [Oregon Kelp Alliance](#) and Port of Bandon to support restoration of Oregon's wild kelp forests through innovative aquaculture projects. Co-culturing dulse and purple urchin aims to reduce pressure on kelp and put local uni on local restaurant menus!



Photo by Rachelle Hacmac @littlezestypdx

## NOTEWORTHY NEWS

Local Ocean seafood restaurant recently transitioned to a new "Perpetual Purpose Trust" ownership model to benefit employees. [LEARN MORE](#)

Winter Waters event series makes national news! OCVA was a series sponsor. [LEARN MORE](#)

National Geographic article - how "blue zones" diets can add 10 years to your life! [READ THE ARTICLE HERE](#)

One of our OCI Businesses featured on "The Meaningful Marketplace", Sarah Masoni's podcast about female food startups. Episode # 134: Tre Fin Seafoods co-founder Eryn Domeyer, was hosted by Sarah Masoni (OSU Food Innovation Center) & Sarah Marshall (Marshall's Haute Sauce) to share fishy tales about their journey into seafood entrepreneurship. Great written summary too. [CHECK OUT BOTH HERE](#)





## OBJECTIVE 2: INCREASE AVAILABILITY

- Supported 3 new delivery routes for local food which is expanding access and creating additional farm business opportunities. These routes, which currently link North Coast communities into Portland, are setting the stage for more regional collaboration, sales and back-haul opportunities with Hood River and Bend in Year 2.
- Successfully leased 2,500 sq ft of space to create more value for local producers - Local Ocean reported DOUBLING their local seafood purchases this year with the capacity provided by new infrastructure at Yaquina Lab in Newport, OR. This new facility offers two 40 ft Conex coolers for cold storage, a fillet room for processing, and co-working space for rent to small seafood and ocean-minded businesses. LFPP grant funds allowed us to support cold storage for 5 small-scale producers in Y1.
- Supported the coordination of a PSU Portland cooperative farmers market booth with 5 local coastal producers providing products.



## EXPANDING NETWORKS

Partner organizations are developing more resources for community-scale food businesses. Check out the links below to learn more!

**Local Catch Network** - This community-of-practice is committed to strengthening local and regional seafood systems by providing support to community supported fisheries and direct-to-consumer seafood businesses

**Oregon Community Food Systems Network** - Hosts Food Hub resources and a community peer learning group

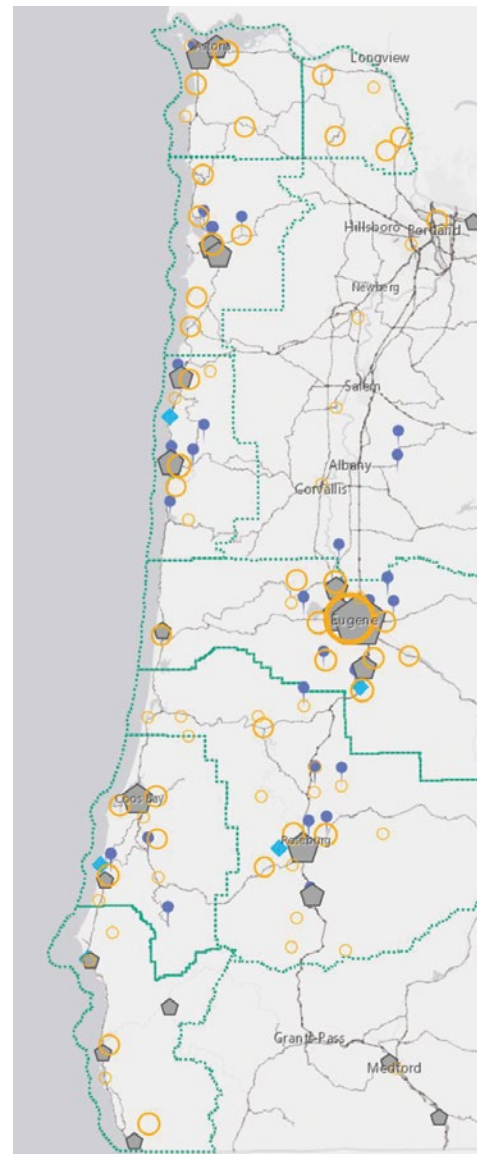
**PNW Food & Beverage Community Google Group** - Resource sharing network offers an email listserv and regular zoom presentations on industry specific topics to support local makers.





## OBJECTIVE 3: STRENGTHEN CAPACITY

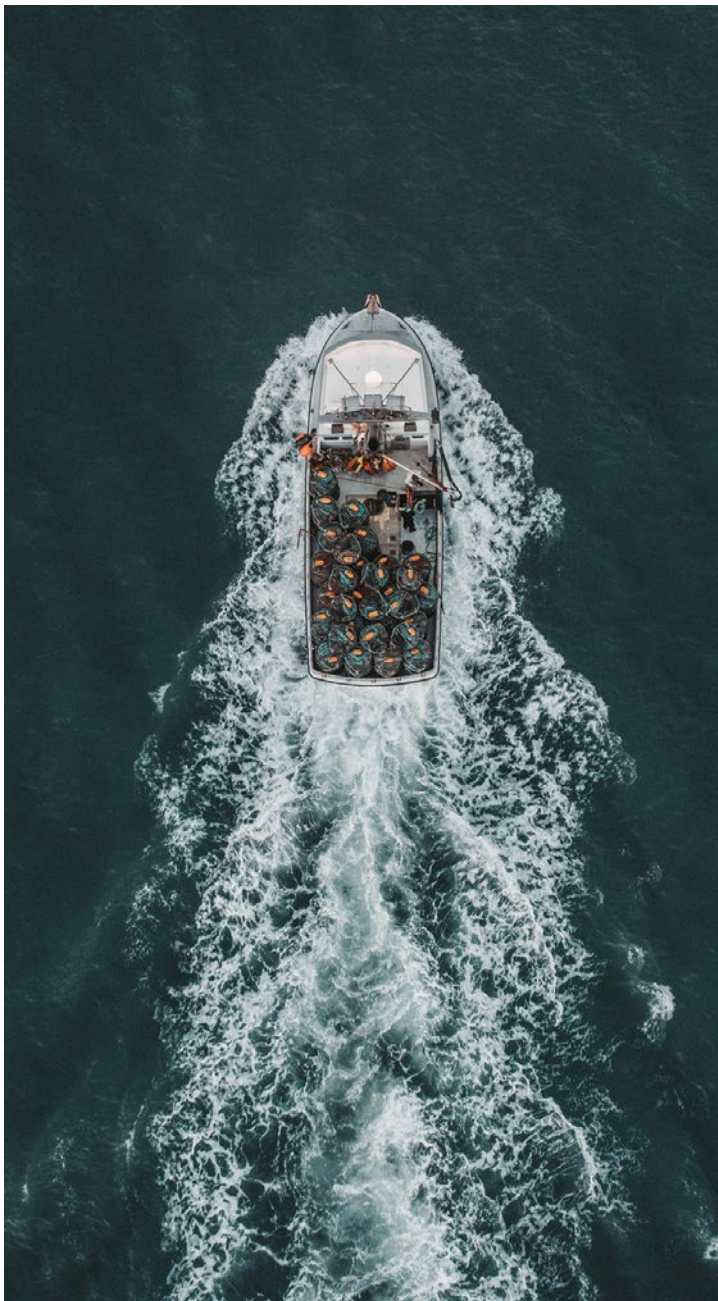
- Developed an [Oregon Coastal Food Prospector](#) mapping tool to help identify gaps in food system infrastructure. The tool is linked to our project website and was presented to a diverse mix of local government, ports, public health, and food network leaders for input in a series of 8 virtual workshops. Based on this feedback, we are currently finishing up an expanded [Oregon Seafood Prospector](#) that shares more fisheries data on activities across port groups and economic impact.
- Funded the [“Potential Economic Impact from Increasing Local Harvest Seafood Consumption on the Oregon Coast”](#) report providing summary information about the major categories of Oregon seafood supply sources.
- Improved coordination across the region with [Oregon Food Hub Network](#) by sharing knowledge and leading discussions on ways to reduce transportation costs, and create shared marketing and infrastructure opportunities.



## WHAT WE ARE LEARNING

**New business tools available!** The Oregon Department of Agriculture has launched an Oregon Food and Beverage Makers Roadmap to assist with planning and understanding how to successfully connect to resources throughout the State of Oregon. Check it out here: [oregon.gov/odaroadmap](https://oregon.gov/odaroadmap)





## OBJECTIVE 3: ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Launched [OregonSeafare.com](https://OregonSeafare.com), an industry facing project website providing producers with resources on how to grow their businesses locally, buyer information on how to access local seafood and aquaculture products, and a pathway for anyone to get involved in the project. Instagram and Facebook accounts [@OregonSeafare](https://www.instagram.com/OregonSeafare) were established.
- Collaboration with Oregon Farm to School Network by supporting the formation of a seafood working group. Regional procurement hub leaders from across Oregon to work on getting more local seafood onto K-12 school menus. This group added new seafood producers to the [Oregon Harvest for School directory](#) and helped facilitate the sale of locally landed and processed albacore tuna into one new school district. This work will be ongoing in Y2 and Y3.
- Also worked with a local aquaculture farm to develop new agritourism interpretive signage that includes QR codes to videos on how to cook with and use red dulse seaweed: a unique Oregon specialty crop.

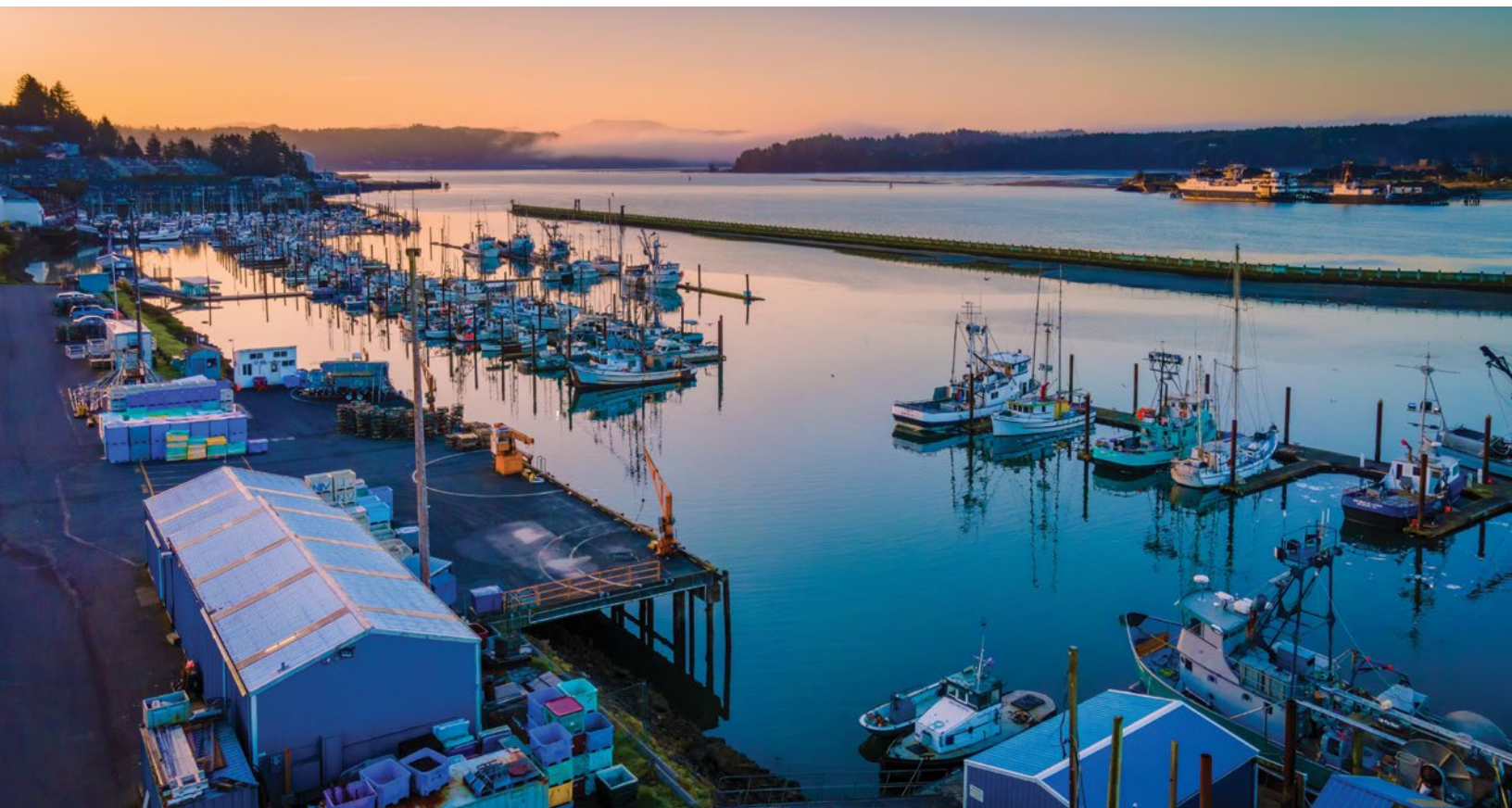
## GRANT AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Though outside of the LFPP scope, our team has also been busy writing grant proposals and providing TA to businesses and partners to secure more funding and capacity for this work.

### PENDING APPLICATIONS

- NIFA (2 proposals): Creation of a Local Seafood Butchery Certificate (SWOCC) and a Seafood Storage and Processing Certificate (OCCC)
- NOAA S-K Grant: Live tank grants, seafood butchery training, food systems directory, meet and greet workshop series





## PARTNERSHIPS

Our partners are our heroes! Together we are working to achieve our grant objectives and deliver collective impact and value to our coastal communities.

- 5 Economic Development Groups
- 6 Ports
- 4 Workforce Development Partners
- 4 Research & Technical Assistance Services
- 8 Processing & Aggregation Businesses
- 16 Retailers and Wholesalers

### Local Ocean Seafood, Newport OR

Local Ocean has connected us with a large consumer audience through their dock box and restaurant program. We plan to continue to work with them on outreach and education to customers including creating collaborative marketing opportunities and sampling/tasting events, among other efforts.

### Yaquina Lab, Newport OR

In its first year, the Lab has supported 5 local producers and one restaurant with fillet and processing space, dry and cold storage, and co-working/office space. In Y2 and Y3, we will help support the development of a live seafood storage system, a shared-use commercial kitchen, and additional cold storage capacity on site.

### North Coast Commons, Wheeler OR

NCC has been instrumental in producer outreach and helping us match supply and demand at a wholesale level. They are serving as a regional distribution partner and coordinated a PSU Portland Farmers Market booth promoting Oregon coast producers.

### KEY BUSINESS OWNER FEEDBACK

"The grant has allowed us to double our local and direct fresh fish purchases, by leasing additional space for filleting and freezing local fish for our restaurant."

"If it weren't for this grant and the cold storage that I received my business would not have even been able to open."

## PARTNERSHIPS

### Astoria Food Hub and North Coast Food Web, Astoria OR

These two organizations are providing storage, commercial kitchen capacity, and serve as aggregators for local food businesses and farmers. Together we are championing better coordination across the North Coast among aggregators to reduce costs. They will continue to serve as a space for food and farm businesses to work side by side in developing products and getting them in front of customers. We will also be exploring ways to partner on additional consumer education, value-added product development, and food safety training opportunities.

### OSU Food Innovation Center, Portland OR

LFPP funds provide support for services. FIC is providing business training and product development for seafood businesses. In the first year, their food scientists worked with Tre Fin Foods to create a new food product with tuna belly, typically considered a byproduct and used mainly for bait, to reduce waste and generate economic opportunity for fishing communities. We look forward to expanding FIC resources and support to other producers.

### OSU Seafood Innovation Lab, Astoria OR

LFPP funds provide support for services. The Seafood Lab is providing advising services and connecting our project to stakeholders and businesses who could use this support. They have specifically advised us on co-packing options for seafood products and are leading our HACCP training series which will happen in Years 2 and 3 of the grant; our first workshop in December provided certification to 11 people. Know a business interested in attending future HACCP workshops? Contact us to learn more at: [vcc@thepeoplescoast.com](mailto:vcc@thepeoplescoast.com)

### Oregon Department of Agriculture

We have worked with the trade and marketing department to explore opportunities for consumer marketing statewide, and their farm-to-school program around regional procurement options. As we go forward, we will continue this marketing and business development work.

### KEY BUSINESS OWNER FEEDBACK

"The support from the Ocean Cluster Initiative has been huge since the start of our Garibaldi farm. From video production, HACCP training, regional distribution and farmers' markets we have reached a much larger audience and customer base. We've been able to save time and energy on larger sales through collective distribution. We believe that ultimately, without this support, our growth would not be as significant as it has been in these beginning years of business."



## PARTNERSHIPS

### Oregon Community Food System Network

OCFSN's [Food Hub Network](#) continues to serve as a platform for discussing and coordinating regional resources including transportation. This peer learning community is comprised of local food hubs and value chain coordinators around the state. Partners include nonprofit organizations, farmers, ranchers, and fishermen, small food businesses, rural economic development agencies. The Network includes and supports both established and developing hubs.

### Travel Oregon

Invited OCVA to present at the Oregon Governor's Conference on Tourism during [key note](#), and participate in a [break-out panel](#) on food systems resilience (Sunriver, OR March 14-16, 2022; est 350 total attendees). We are tremendously grateful to Travel Oregon for their ongoing support of our coastal food trails and food systems programming.

### Oregon Kelp Alliance (ORKA) & Port of Bandon

New projects are on the horizon to investigate how Dulse and Purple Sea Urchin ranching can help save Oregon's wild kelp forests while creating a new specialty food product for market. OCVA has provided funding to secure a commercial harvest permit to help cull purple urchins which are devouring wild kelp, and funding from Wild Rivers Coast Alliance will allow a unique co-culture system to be built. The system will "fatten up" starved urchins on a diet of Oregon-grown red dulse seaweed, to produce uni for the specialty seafood market.

### Port Orford Sustainable Seafood

"OCVA has allowed for us to develop the infrastructure necessary to transform the front of our processing facility into an "open air" type storefront. This lends to the potential for anyone to come window shop and purchase the catch of the day, or maybe even a prepared seafood meal that they want to take home for lunch or dinner" - Mike Baran, POSS



## NEW PARTNERSHIP AND MARKETING CAMPAIGN



Photo by Rachelle Hacmac @littlezestypdx

[Winter Waters](#) - a culinary event celebrating regenerative seafare, kicked off in February 2023. Portland and Oregon Coast chefs and tastemakers partnered to highlight local and climate friendly ingredients through a month-long series of ticketed events and menu specials. Sponsors included OCVA, Oregon Seaweed, and Blue Evolution.

This series benefited the [Oregon Kelp Alliance](#) and their mission to restore Oregon's wild kelp forests, while allowing consumers to taste and experience healthy, delicious foods from the sea.





## WHERE WE ARE HEADED

Y2:Q1 is a wrap! Year one allowed us to get great traction on local projects and in this first quarter of year two we're making excellent progress on some of the strategic layers for work in 2023. A few works in progress include:

- OCVA's new Creative Director is developing a seafood campaign and marketing strategy and timeline for 2023 - check out the [new page](#) on OCVA main website highlighting Oregon seafood!
- CCFW - a new Central Coast Food Web non-profit was formed to act as an operational management partner at Yaquina Lab. Laura Anderson, Kristen Penner, Cari Brandberg (Chelsea Rose Seafoods), and Issie Corvi (Local Ocean Seafoods) are founding board members.
- OCI team attend the 2022 [Local Catch Seafood Summit](#) in Alaska - we made exciting new connections with the network's executive committee, Oregon-based USDA program staff and the [Wave Foundation](#).
- In partnership with Oregon Department of Agriculture, content updates and digitization are underway for Laura Anderson's fisheries exhibit, "[Our Beautiful and Wild Oregon Fisheries](#)". Stay tuned for updates.
- Oregon Sea Grant is partnering with Washington Sea Grant and California Sea Grant on a "Discover West Coast Seafood" campaign this year. Our VCC will be attending their planning sessions to see how we can work to collaborate in the future.

## 2023 GOALS

1. **Infrastructure Need:** Help secure funding for more cold storage, live tank system and commercial kitchen at Yaquina Lab.
2. Help six more business connect to support and services at Yaquina Lab
3. Schedule two more HACCP trainings on north and south coast





## FEEDBACK

At the end of 2022, we collected feedback from the businesses we have worked with via informal interviews and end-of-year impact reporting.

Participating businesses reported, in aggregate, **AN 8% INCREASE IN SALES** over the previous year. We have also found a high degree of excitement and value in our work. Ten of the businesses we engaged stated that the support we provided was extremely helpful while an additional business said it was very helpful. We received the following feedback from beneficiaries:

- // *We were able to develop programs otherwise not yet financially feasible, to grow our business and to help other producers. This program helped our visions become reality, and grow in a healthy and sustainable way, and we feel supported to continue this growth."*
- // *The grant has allowed our customers to lease space at a lower cost than would be possible without the grant. This helps our business by providing needed rents to cover our start-up costs."*
- // *Without the transportation assistance, we would not be able to sell to some of the regional markets due to distance/time for transporting our products. As this process grows, to include more locations and areas, our small farm will be able to plan more production, which will assist in finding more buyers and sales avenues."*



## THANK YOU!

We extend our deepest gratitude to all of our partners, co-conspirators, and collaborators. We could not do this work without your support.

**Wishing all of you a prosperous and productive 2023!**