



REQUEST FOR PRE-PROPOSALS

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The USDA-NIFA Southern Regional Aquaculture Center solicits response from qualified multi-state teams interested in participating in the regional project:

POLICY ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGES IN FEDERAL AUTHORITY UNDER THE LACEY ACT TO PROHIBIT INTERSTATE MOVEMENT OF INJURIOUS WILDLIFE

SRAC's Board of Directors has authorized up to \$125,000 for a 1-year project on the implications of recent changes to the Lacey Act. This project will be developed using the "competitive proposal method" where a team of multi-state scientists having demonstrated records of expertise in the subject complete a single pre-proposal that addresses all project objectives. One proposal will be selected for funding based on review by a committee of scientists not involved in any of the proposals that are submitted.

Background

Southern regional aquaculture depends heavily on interstate and international trade in live fish and aquatic animals. Regulatory changes that affect live animal trade have potentially major implications for regional aquaculture. Recent court cases brought against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) by the U.S. Association of Reptile Keepers (USARK vs Jewell and USARK vs Zinke) have determined that the USFWS lacks the authority to prohibit shipments of injurious wildlife across state lines within the continental United States. Many in commercial aquaculture, agency hatcheries, or in university aquaculture research and extension are unaware of the changes in implementation of the Lacey Act and the potentially serious implications for commercial, stock enhancement, and conservation aquaculture as individual states move forward with their own regulatory plans.

Some states are considering adding current and future federal injurious wildlife to their prohibited lists. This is potentially problematic because there is a current petition to list several important southern regional aquaculture species as injurious wildlife, including native blue catfish (including hybrid catfish) and red swamp crayfish as well as non-native grass carp, guppy, koi carp, and tilapia. Some states are also considering USFWS protocols, the Ecological Risk Screening Summaries (ERSS; https://www.fws.gov/fisheries/ans/species_erss.html), to identify future species which may be placed on prohibited lists. Blanket adoption of current and future injurious wildlife and/or USFWS protocols could affect selection of the regulatory frameworks and protocols for individual states or regions. There is considerable need for basic education on this issue for industry, agencies, and academics. An analysis of potential state and regional actions and their likely consequences for aquaculture industries in the southern region is especially warranted and timely. A policy analysis of potential responses to recent changes in the Lacey Act can inform the industry as well as regulatory agencies in order to improve decision making for an environmentally responsible and economically effective outcome.

Objectives

- 1) Explore the range of options available for states to evaluate the risks associated with permitting the transport of non-native species across state lines within the contiguous United States and how each state currently regulates these species.

- 2) Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of each option identified from objective 1 and analyze the regulatory implications for southern regional aquaculture across the range of policy approaches.
- 3) Provide a management recommendation to the states in the southern region based on the outcomes of objectives 1 and 2.

Experimental Approach

This project will be expected to investigate and outline existing methodologies and criteria used by states within the region to determine which species are listed as concern for invasion or as injurious. This project should also identify methods used elsewhere within the US and internationally to create a broad range of policy options. This project is also expected to analyze the implications of policy decisions by individual states. For example, if US Fish and Wildlife Service approach is selected, what are the implications of this decision on the ability to transport commodities, including blue catfish, red swamp crayfish, ornamentals, and tilapia. Emphasis on policy implications should be placed on species important to southern region aquaculture, including blue catfish, grass carp, red swamp crayfish, tilapia, and ornamentals.

Building upon the study findings, this project should provide management recommendations for states in the southern region, including the potential for regional collaborations. Recommendations should include methodological considerations (i.e., adoption of ERRS; harmonization with USFWS injurious wildlife list) as well as the associated strengths and weaknesses of policy decisions should specific options be chosen.

Proposals must address all three objectives, available policy options, implications of policy decisions, and management recommendations. To meet the criterion for a regional project, the proposal must include collaboration from scientists in two or more states or territories in the Southern Region (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Virginia). Output from the data needs identification objective will be expected to include data needs for other major aquaculture species.

How to Respond

Pre-proposals must address all objectives. Preference will be given to pre-proposals that show a high degree of collaboration and coordination among participants. To meet the criterion for a regional project, the pre-proposal must include collaboration from scientists in two or more states or territories in the Southern Region (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Virginia).

The pre-proposal must include a one page vita for each participant and a proposed budget for each participating institution or organization. Pre-proposals, vitae, and budgets that are not in the proper format will not be considered. (See "Format for Pre-Proposals" file attached or contact Kristen Thompson with the SRAC office at 662-686-3269.)

Send an electronic copy of the pre-proposal in Word format to Jimmy Avery, SRAC Director as an email attachment (javery.avery@msstate.edu) by **September 30, 2018**. Proposals received after that date will not be considered.