



# Results Post-conference survey for the 2023 Mariculture Conference of Alaska

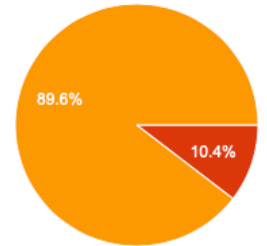
1. Are you an Alaska resident?

48 responses

- 36 Yes
- 12 No

2. The conference was:

- 0 Long
- 5 Short
- 43 Just right

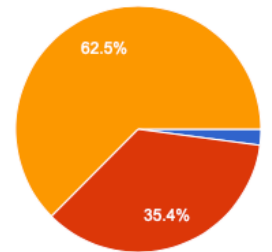


3. The number of oral presentations was:

- 11 Long
- 2 Short
- 35 Just right

4. Social time for meeting with colleagues was:

- 1 Long
- 17 Short
- 30 Just right



5. Was finding information on the website easy?

- 22 Yes
- 2 No
- 24 Sort of

6. Did the program content meet your expectations?

- 39 Yes
- 0 No
- 9 Sort of

7. If you were a presenter, were you adequately informed about the program?

- 15 Yes
- 1 No
- 5 Sort of
- 27 n/a

8. What was your biggest takeaway/lesson learned from the conference?

Quotes from survey respondents and responses categorized

- 11 Better understanding of mariculture/industry  
*"The industry is still in its early phases here in Alaska."*  
*"There is much more going on in mariculture than you would think."*
- 10 Kelp drying challenges and opportunities  
*"Drying kelp is the holy grail for processing and bull kelp for farming—lots of good info sharing and collaborative atmosphere."*  
*"We need more kelp drying capacity, and we need to figure out how to farm bull kelp."*
- 9 Challenges and opportunities of industry growth and development  
*"Lots of potential for production, but markets are still elusive."*

“The number of industry stakeholders and policy makers from across the state and country in attendance was good. The opportunity to meet with people and network after the Alaska Mariculture Alliance meeting on the first day was fabulous. The conference was well organized and time management was pretty well executed.”

Responses from this survey are being used by the planning committee for the Mariculture Conference of Alaska to guide future conferences. Your input was greatly appreciated.

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*"Interest in AK mariculture is growing and the Alaska farmers face many of the same challenges growers in other parts of the country face (e.g., inconsistent application of permitting processes and regulations)."*

*"There is a lot of work left to do in making mariculture in Alaska economically viable at scale."*

- 8 Value of collaboration and partnerships
  - "There's a lot of potential and there is a lot of room for research, innovation, and growth, but farmers have to seek this out and develop it/drive it."*
  - "Collaboration is key! Great to get growers, regulators, and researchers in one room, and folks from outside of Alaska."*
- 5 Importance of diverse perspectives and representation
  - "Working together, sharing information; I also think there's a need for more outreach and equity in the industry to work with Alaska Native communities. There was very little representation from the Alaska Native communities. Only Native Conservancy and a few folks from Southeast Alaska."*
- 4 General conference praise
  - "So much excellent information! It was the best mariculture conference I've ever been to!"*
  - "I was so inspired by all the brilliant minds at the event!"*

## 9. The conference's strengths were:

Quotes from survey respondents and responses categorized

- 20 Diversity of presenters, topics and perspectives
  - "Great energy and positivity. Diverse information."*
  - "Variety of topics and perspectives."*
  - "The willingness of the mariculture community to collaborate, and the diverse fields of the speakers"*
- 15 Conference organization and planning
  - "The conference was large enough to provide diverse perspectives and knowledge exchange between different stakeholders (e.g., industry, regulators, NGOs), but small enough to allow for more productive discussion and conversation."*
  - "Well organized, good food, excellent content, good mix of participants, exciting to see so many young people."*
  - "The short presentations that encouraged regular growers to participate. The travel funding for farmers to allow more growers to attend. The bull kelp panel and specific topic to dig into with practitioners."*
- 8 Industry networking and collaboration
  - "Networking, and the program. Really great to see so many people turn out in only the second year, and from such distances, even within AK. Well organized, and with a really nice feel to the event"*
  - "Getting everybody together, having discussions, transferring knowledge, making connections."*
  - "Amazing networking opportunity, wonderful to have people from other regions present. I really liked the bull kelp panel as it was great to drill down on a single important topic."*
  - "Collaborative atmosphere—input from colleagues in Maine and PNW."*
- 4 Current events and trends

## 10. The conference's weaknesses were:

Quotes from survey respondents and responses categorized

- 6 None
- 6 Overall conference organization and planning
  - "Too much waste of non-recyclable materials for catered food and drink. Please try to use more environmentally friendly plates and utensils in the future."*
  - "A lot to fit into only two days, though I still think the conference was the right length."*
- 6 Lack of diversity
  - "More Alaska Native involvement in discussions about the development of the industry."*
  - "I would like to see more information on respectful engagement with Alaska Native coastal communities. Also, I'd like to see more about the implications for food security and circular economies. So far, there's a lot of emphasis on export but nothing about the actual long-term benefits to Alaskan communities and livelihoods."*
  - "No industry/market representatives!"*



- 9 Time allocation
  - "Thursday was a long day, I would have preferred to have Friday and Thursday be equal lengths, more time to socialize."*
  - "Time allocation. I thought it would have been better to spread out the speakers over two days rather than one and a half days. Thursday felt too long and Friday too short. There wasn't enough time to talk to people."*
  - "Too many presentations on the second day. Would have liked more networking time."*
- 17 Other
  - 1 *"It should be in Anchorage."*
  - 2 *"IT— many speakers waiting for slides to be brought up, slides blipping on and off, slides not visible to speakers unless they turn back to audience; slightly longer or more frequent breaks would be appreciated"*
  - 2 *"Talks were a bit redundant with repeat speakers."*
  - 2 *"I would have liked more presentations related to shellfish."*
  - 2 *"We skimmed the surface on a lot of topics and maybe we could have gone deeper in on some topics as a panel instead of so many stand-alone presenters."*
  - 3 *"I never had a chance to look at the posters. A longer dedicated poster session with authors standing nearby to answer questions would be nice."*
  - 5 *"I would have liked more work in breakout groups, with share outs back to the group."*

**11. Did you learn anything new that you will apply in your field as a result of attending? If so, please provide an example or two.**

- 16 New perspectives
  - "Yes! I'm fairly new to Alaska so it was great to get an overview of so many different projects and perspectives."*
  - "I learned that all kelp farmers need more support in order to make this a viable industry."*
  - "Lots, most valuable is hearing from the growers and better understanding differences and commonalities in terms of benefits and challenges farming shellfish in the U.S."*
  - "Yes. I learned a lot about the challenges that need to be overcome in Alaska to develop mariculture to the industry that exists in Maine."*

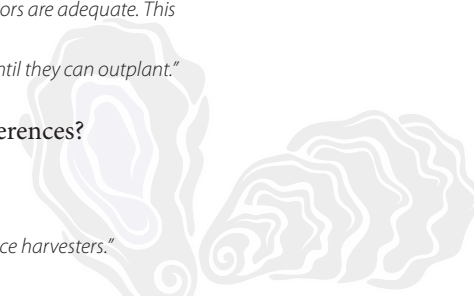
\*\*9 of the 16 new perspectives can be further categorized into:

  - 4 on markets and products
  - 3 on farming gear and techniques
  - 2 on water quality testing
- 15 Networking and data sharing
  - "I learned from the bull kelp panel some advice for cultivation techniques on my farm. And through connections I made, I will be receiving seed from another hatchery this fall."*
- 6 Processing and drying technology
  - "Yes, lots of insights pertaining to kelp drying."*
- 6 Research
  - "I may have multiple studies take place at my kelp farm."*
  - "Yes, I will reach out to more farmers about putting our sensors and getting samples from their farms."*
  - "I was able to understand the need for the industry and apply it to my current position in mariculture. I am more able to provide research ideas at my current institution to answer burning questions that were brought up at the conference."*
- 2 Specific tools and resources
  - "Mapping technology to help applicants with site selection."*
  - "I learned about online tools to check proposed gear configurations to assess if anchors are adequate. This will be helpful in my ESA Section 7 reviews."*
  - "I learned that some farmers are using cages to keep kelp seed spools in the ocean until they can outplant."*

**12. Are there any topics you'd specifically like to see covered in future conferences?**

Quotes from survey respondents and responses categorized

- 5 Business planning
  - "How to minimize conflicts with other user groups, specifically fisheries and subsistence harvesters."*



*"Business planning specific to mariculture—how to create a 3 or 5 year plan (expense reports, production costs, etc. ) How to start up and maintain a business."*

- 4 Emerging/new species  
*"Species with high demands in other countries that Alaska could consider growing (e.g. Laminaria spp., abalone)."*  
*"Mariculture besides oysters and kelp?"*
- 3 Carbon management  
*"What do we as farmers need to be doing in order to position ourselves to be able to participate in the carbon sequestration market that seems to be getting a lot of hype?"*  
*"I would like to [see] some more information about carbon credits and how it will benefit the industry in Alaska."*
- 3 Product development  
*"What actual products Alaska kelp is being made into, and what the potential is for having production here in the state. It seems we're very concerned that we must dry the kelp to be able to ship it cost effectively to other places where they will use the dried product to make items. Can we make those products here?"*  
*"Mariculture for land-based agriculture inputs—fertilizers and animal feed."*
- 3 Trade show  
*"I would like to see equipment and technology producers at future conferences. Being able to meet with equipment suppliers to discuss what farmers need in terms of harvesting and processing equipment innovations will benefit both parties."*
- 32 Other
  - 1 Energy
  - 1 Nurseries
  - 1 Permitting
  - 1 More shellfish
  - 1 More dedicated networking time
  - 1 Greener alternatives
  - 2 More 'notes from the farmer'
  - 2 Seed supply and seeding
  - 2 Indigenous voices  
*"How to increase Alaska Native involvement in mariculture (hearing directly from Alaska Natives)."*  
*"Would like to hear from more Indigenous voices."*
  - 2 Industry growth  
*"How big does Alaska want this industry to be and at what point is big too big?"*
  - 2 Processing technology
  - 2 Tour local facilities
  - 2 Culinary workshop
  - 2 International perspective
  - 2 More interactive panels
  - 2 Multitrophic mariculture
  - 2 Focus on indigenous species
- 4 No, there were plenty  
*"There was plenty this year—keep up the good work."*

### 13. Where would you like to see next year's conference held?

- |              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 25 Juneau    | 4 Cordova       |
| 11 Kodiak    | 3 Sitka         |
| 11 Anchorage | 1 Craig         |
| 6 Homer      | 1 Seward        |
| 4 Ketchikan  | 3 No preference |

### 14. Additional comments:

Quotes from survey respondents

*"Overall, this was one of the best conferences I've been to in a long time. It was clearly carefully planned. I look forward to attending next year. Kudos to the planning team!"*

*"Really a nice event; excellent networking, lots of useful content, venue and food were great, and it just had a good vibe to it all. So grateful to have been part of it, and I'd definitely like to return for future years." ■*

*"Really great to see so many people turn out in only the second year, and from such distances, even within Alaska. Well organized, and with a really nice feel to the event."*



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