Developing Value-Added Aquaculture Products

What Is Value-Added?

Adding value means employing processing methods, specialized ingredients or novel packaging to enhance the nutrition, sensory characteristics, shelf life and *convenience* of food products.

Consumers Are Time-Starved

- Four of American’s top time-saving activities involve food: 68% eat out, 64% bring home take-out meals, 41% reheat frozen meals, and 35% cook the main course in a microwave.
- Currently 80% of seafood dollars are spent in the foodservice sector. Red Lobster dominates the $4.8-billion seafood chain segment with 2001 sales of $2.2 billion.
- Almost half (46%) of U.S. food dollars are spent away from home.
- By 2010, 53% of U.S. food dollars will likely be spent outside the home.

Consumers Are Demanding More Fish

- Per capita consumption of seafood in the U.S. increased from 14.6 pounds in 1997 to 16.3 pounds in 2003.
- Fish is viewed as heart-healthy: *high protein and low fat*.
- Pre-prepared seafood meals account for 25% of all in-store seafood sales.
- Consumer demand is increasing for seasonal, locally-harvested seafood.
Popular Fishery Products

- Tilapia is among the “Top Ten” foods appearing on restaurant menus
- Shrimp is the top-selling seafood in the U.S.
- Shrimp and clams are replacing high-fat breakfast meats in trendy restaurants
- Fried seafood represents nearly 50 percent of all restaurant appetizer sales

State Supported Technical Assistance for Fish Growers and Processors

- The NC State Seafood Laboratory is a technical resource center dedicated to enhancing the post-harvest handling, processing and distribution of fishery products
- The NC Fishery Resource Grant Program provides funding to help industry develop value-added products and determine the marketability of seafood
- The Seafood Laboratory and NC Sea Grant have assisted seven in-state businesses commercialize 30 new fishery products since mid 1990s: Scallop Medallions
- The idea for a bacon-wrapped, seafood appetizer line came out of NC Fishery Resource Grant 02-ST-05

Creating a Marketing Program for Value-Added Products

Developmental Assistance Supported by NC Fishery Resource Grant 03-ST-03

Developing a Brand Name

- Public relations firm Fleishman Hillard evaluated Southern Farm brand name
- Reviewed the VISION and STRATEGY of the products/business
  - How are our business strategies helping our competitive advantage?
- Explored the CURRENT IMAGE of the brand
  - What kind of image is now being conveyed to customers?
- Defined the DESIRED IMAGE
  - What words and ideas define our company? Who is our target customer? How do we want our customers to think about our brand and products?
Brand Evaluation Result

- Decided on two brand names from a list of 16
- Trademark review conducted by an attorney
- Final result:
  - Coastal Treasure brand for all seafood products.
  - Southern Farm brand for all beef and pork products.
- Simple wording promotes instant consumer awareness.
- Developed a TAG LINE to support both brands:
  - "Certified Southern" identifies company's heritage and supports the "Freshness from NC Waters" program.

Packaging Development and In-Store Displays

- Brand logos for the Coastal Treasure and Southern Farm brands are similar.
- Distinct colors for each brand allow for visual association and differentiation.
- Readable font. Simple design permits reproduction on stationary or clothing.
- Outline of the state communicates company origin and supports the "Freshness from NC Waters" program.
- Product packaging and labels are being finalized.
- In-store displays will be produced when product line goes to retail.

Sales Brochures

- Contracted with a professional photographer to take photos of the appetizer line.
- Five thousand sales brochures were produced for $1800.
- Company stationary was printed with the Coastal Treasure and Southern Farm logos.
- Designed a survey sheet with both color and black and white graphics so logos would reproduce well on any printer.
- Objective: deliver a consistent brand image on everything from business cards and letterhead to company clothing, product packaging and in-store displays.

Advertising Program

- First trade advertisement was placed in the Southern Foods catalog.
- Working directly with Southern Foods to develop strong trade relationships.
- Participate in product trade shows.
- Create advertising programs for different markets.
- Current emphasis is on food service.

Promotions Development

- Trade promotions will be coordinated with key distributors.
- Offer Off-Invoice trade promotions during key selling periods.
- For the appetizer line, promote product April - May for the heavy wedding season as well in September - October - November for the holiday entertaining season.
- Potential in-store retail activities include:
  - In-store sampling
  - Develop stand-alone promotional displays
  - In-store coupons such as "take-one" coupons or register coupons printed at check-out.
  - Advertise and price promote in weekly store flyers.