

Regal Springs to implement first project for new seafood charity



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Members of the Napa Seafood Foundation (NSF) board, the new philanthropic organization formed by attendees of the Napa Seafood Summit, said they have decided their pilot project will be aimed at establishing tilapia farms in a small village in southern Mexico.

Several attendees of The Napa Seafood Summit, an annual event for seafood industry executives held in September in Napa, California, said they were interested

Regal Springs Tilapia

in establishing the NSF, a project aimed at alleviating poverty and hunger by teaching impoverished communities how to establish and maintain small-scale fishing and aquaculture projects.

"Napa Seafood Summit believes that we will help people in the battle against extreme poverty, and we intend to gradually grow this project to global scale," the foundation said in a release.

For its first project, the NSF has proposed to sponsor Regal Springs in its efforts to teach 20 to 30 women of Coquitos Mexico how to farm tilapia with the goal of helping them establish and manage their own cooperative farms.

"We will provide the boots on the ground," said Lian Caspi, who coordinates social investment projects in Honduras, Mexico and Indonesia at Regal Springs.

Coquitos, a small village of roughly 25 families located on Lake Malpasos in southern Mexico, borders a forested and protected natural reserve which makes the area unsuitable for traditional farming such as raising cattle, and locals are not permitted to fish in protected areas, forcing men to travel far to find agricultural work.

The project aims to teach the women of Coquitos how to farm tilapia by helping them establish a co-op qualified to receive government funding, and by donating the first round of fingerlings.

One tilapia cage will cost approximately \$2,500, and will generate about \$1,000 in income for one family in a five-month cycle, NSF said in a presentation at the Napa Seafood Summit.

NSF is in the process of raising funds to pay for the pilot.

According to its presentation, the foundation estimates it will need \$25,000 to support five households in Coquitos, \$50,000 for 20 households, and with \$100,000 it said it can provide farms to 36 individuals and "change life in Coquitos".

The initiative is consistent with the Napa Seafood Foundation's philosophy of teaching people to sustainably support themselves, the organization said in the presentation.

"The Regal Springs implementation team will provide education, inputs, guidance, agricultural and managerial assistance to the women of Coquitos."

NSF is in the process of applying for 501(c)(3) non-profit status, and has appointed to the board Robert Denhart of PLTC Trade Services, Soren Dalsager of Everfish/Yutai, Larry Cotter of Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association and Magdalena Wallhoff of Regal Springs.

The organization's next project will likely be in Indonesia, where Regal Springs also has a big tilapia operation, NSF said.

According to the presentation, the keys to success will be choosing the right participants, ongoing agricultural and educational assistance, management support from the implementation team and adequate security from theft or corruption.

Regal Springs, which has recently [taken a minority investment from Golden Springs Group](#), has been expanding its operations in Mexico in recent years.

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