

The Next Big Aquaculture Investment: Fish Oil Alternatives

Today more than half of all seafood we eat is farmed. And, by 2030 it is estimated that this number will grow by almost 15 percent. China, the global leader in aquaculture, currently farms more fish than all other countries in the world combined. Today, fish farming potential hinges on the availability of fishmeal and fish oil from wild-caught fish to grow these aquacultured products. The uncertainty in their availability now and in the near future to support aquaculture operations will pose a serious bottleneck for the aquaculture supply chain.

Fortunately, there are a growing number of protein substitutes for fishmeal, and emerging sources for fish oil. This problem offers an enormous business opportunity to capture a share of the estimated \$10 billion alternative feedstock sector for those willing to invest in aquaculture's bright future. These important omega fatty acids, once only available from wild-caught fish, are now being derived from novel ingredients as diverse as algae and vegetable oils. These omega oils are vital to grow nutritious fish and are also gaining popularity as human nutritional supplements for their heart and brain health benefits.

To stimulate further investment in the alternative oils market and take pressure off wild fish to supply the growing market, a new global competition, the F3 Fish Oil Challenge, was recently launched. The contest will award \$100,000+ USD to the company or team that sells the most "fish-free" fish oil alternatives during an 11-month sales period. Companies must register by April 30, 2018 to compete.

"The contest was designed to spark innovation in the fish oil alternatives market," said Kevin Fitzsimmons, lead judge for the F3 Challenge and professor at the University of Arizona. "We are seeking industry leaders to join the global race to develop and sell cost-competitive fish oil replacements for aquafeeds."

The incentives to join the race go beyond the economic growth potential and prize money. All participants will receive international recognition as a sustainability leader and expanded opportunities to tell its sustainable story directly to consumers through ongoing marketing and media coverage during the contest. Contestants will also be invited to San Francisco, California, for an invitation-only event in February of 2019 to network with like-minded industry leaders, explore new joint ventures, and meet with investors and biotech leaders in Silicon Valley. These extra benefits are likely to open new market and partnership opportunities not readily available to businesses today.

Seafood is billed as the healthiest and most sustainable foods for people and the planet, and yet the marine environment is already having trouble keeping up with the demand. As the world population climbs to 9.6 billion people by 2050, as a global society we must ensure that the growing demand for seafood is achieved in the most sustainable way by replacing the use of wild-caught fish in fish farming.

The global fish oil market is projected to reach over \$4 billion by 2021, and the rapidly expanding growing global aquaculture industry is the greatest source of demand for fish oil. Demand for fish oil as an ingredient in dietary supplements and pet food is also on the rise.

Are you ready for the challenge? Register at f3challenge.org or contact the F3 Team at f3fishfreefeed@gmail.com.