

Group to focus on industry assistance

A work group of representatives from about 10 state and federal agencies is studying mariculture development in Alaska and will be making policy recommendations to the Alaska Mariculture Association.

The Mariculture Technical Work Group, which was formed at the invitation of AMA, met Oct. 30 and is scheduled to make final recommendations by mid-November.

Since the socio-economic concerns associated with mariculture develop-

ment are more properly addressed in the political forum of the Legislature, AMA asked the work group to keep its recommendations focused on governmental approaches to environmental, biological and public health issues raised by mariculture development in Alaska.

The work group also will examine how the state can assist the emerging mariculture industry through development programs, tax policies and research.

Among issues raised for discussion and analysis were disease management, water quality, sedimentation, importation of non-indigenous species, escapes of cultured species and genetic implications for wild species, use of antibiotics and biocides, brood stock sources and allocations of wild species for brood stock, product quality, tax structure, governmental development assistance programs and research priorities.

Participating in the Mariculture

Technical Work Group are the Alaska Departments of Fish and Game, Commerce and Economic Development, Environmental Conservation and Revenue, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Forest Service, the University of Alaska — Juneau and Sea Grant.

AMA plans to distribute the work group recommendations to industry, legislators and Alaska's new governor.