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FAU Harbor Branch Partners with Local Seafood Company to Produce Healthy, Safe Fish for Consumers

FORT PIERCE, Fla. (September 21, 2015) – The product of a project spawned out of a partnership between FAU Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute (HBOI) and local company Amy’s Island Seafood could end up being your next healthy dinner choice. The two entities have come together to design and implement a method of fish farming – or aquaculture – that produces safe, sustainable seafood for local consumers. The products, such as cobia, will be traceable from inception to plate, ensuring a high level of quality for customers unmatched by any other system.

“Many traditional aquaculture systems worldwide have been known to produce a great deal of waste and utilize excessive antibiotics,” said Paul Wills, Ph.D., FAU Harbor Branch research professor and program manager. “This Florida project between HBOI and Amy’s Island aims to provide a solution by creating a safe, sustainable means of fish farming that utilizes higher quality water and feed, resulting in a product that is safe and sustainable.”

There are a variety of challenges facing the aquaculture industry, with one of the most significant being that with an increased need for more seafood to match the ever-growing growing human population, there is a need to use innovative technologies to lessen the impact on the environment and at the same time produce healthy seafood.

“Consumers have become more conscious of the food supply chain and are looking for food sources that are of outstanding quality, humanely treated and grown with minimal impact to the environment,” said Amy Zwemer, owner and operator of Amy’s Island Seafood. “The recent addition of cobia broodstock to the operation will allow us to control the quality of our cobia from egg to market – this is something not many companies can do for their customers.”

Aquaculture is an important industry worldwide and is growing locally, having been identified as a target industry by the St. Lucie County Economic Development Council (EDC).

“This project and partnership sets the stage for growth of this target industry not only in this area, but in Florida and nationally,” said Pete Tesch, president of the EDC. “St. Lucie

County is an ideal location for aquaculture and for this project as our climate offers a tremendous opportunity for year-round production.”

Amy’s Island Seafood’s first batch of cobia, which is currently 4 months old, will be ready for market by the end of the year.

For more information, contact Carin Smith 772-242-2230 or at carinsmith@fau.edu.

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About Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute:

Founded in 1971, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute at Florida Atlantic University is a research community of marine scientists, engineers, educators and other professionals focused on Ocean Science for a Better World. The institute drives innovation in ocean engineering, at-sea operations, drug discovery and biotechnology from the oceans, coastal ecology and conservation, marine mammal research and conservation, aquaculture, ocean observing systems and marine education. For more information, visit www.fau.edu/hboi.

About Florida Atlantic University:

Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of \$6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU’s world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of critical areas that form the basis of its strategic plan: Healthy aging, biotech, coastal and marine issues, neuroscience, regenerative medicine, informatics, lifespan and the environment. These areas provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU’s existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.

About Amy’s Island Seafood:

Our mission is to produce quality seafood products in an environmentally friendly manner using closed recirculating [Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture \(IMTA\)](#) systems. We are openly sharing the science behind this technology through a partnership with [FAU - Harbor Branch](#) to promote sustainability and profitability in the industry.