



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR  
AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

## **Ground-breaking virtual reality-based education program launched for the Newfoundland and Labrador Aquaculture Sector**

**(Grand Falls-Windsor, NL, May 18, 2022)** – The Newfoundland and Labrador Aquaculture Industry Association (NAIA) today officially launched *Aquaculture 101*, a new virtual reality-based educational program geared to provide students and participants with a comprehensive understanding of the growing sector and the many opportunities it presents.

The program is a \$550,000 partnership between NAIA and the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills, under its Labour Market Partnerships Program. The technology, resources, and course materials were developed jointly by Learning Labs and Keyin College in collaboration with NL aquaculture producers.

**“One of the challenges of educating people about aquaculture is the fact it’s difficult for people to get a first-hand farm experience – after all, ocean farming is a highly technical, detailed process that is carried out in rural areas, with strict biosecurity protocols in place. *Aquaculture 101* changes that using VR technology and resources to give participants a highly detailed, hands-on feel for shellfish and finfish farming in Newfoundland and Labrador.”**

- **NAIA Executive Director Jamie Baker**

*Aquaculture 101* is a fully developed educational course that includes detailed teacher resources combined with a series of presentations that cover all aspects of the sector. In addition to the fully immersive, 360-degree virtual farm tours covering finfish and shellfish, there are video based learning modules that also speak to the history of the sector as well as the science and technology employed in ocean farming.

The course also includes career profiles, and presentations from site managers, veterinarians, and quality assurance staff.

**“*Aquaculture 101* is designed to be a versatile educational tool that can be accessed by people of all ages, but we are largely focused on our young people. Students participating in the program will be able to get a strong understanding of the sector, test what they have learned and even receive a certificate when they have completed the course. Hopefully, we will get some of those students thinking about a career in aquaculture in the years ahead.”**

- **NAIA President Sheldon George, Cooke Aquaculture**

The shellfish and finfish aquaculture sectors continue to provide critical food security for the province, while greatly reducing the carbon footprint for protein production, and dramatically increasing economic opportunities in rural, coastal communities. In 2021 the NL sector had a production volume of 19,635 metric tonnes worth an estimated \$189.3 million.

As established in the Provincial Government's "*The Way Forward on Aquaculture*," the province and industry have a shared goal of reaching 50,000 tonnes of salmon production and 10,750 tonnes of mussel production.

**“As we sustainably grow and develop this sector, we want to make sure the public – especially our young people – clearly understand the farming process and the opportunities and benefits aquaculture bring to the province. Aquaculture 101 will be a great way to assist in developing the sector and giving people a true sense for what the hard-working ocean farmers in Newfoundland and Labrador are bringing to the table.”**

- **NAIA Executive Director Jamie Baker**

### **About NAIA**

The Newfoundland and Labrador Aquaculture Industry Association (NAIA) is a member-based organization that represents the interests of seafood farmers and their suppliers in Newfoundland and Labrador. We are passionate advocates on behalf of our members to facilitate and promote the responsible development of the aquaculture industry.

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