Aquaculture Boot Camp (ABC): An innovative training process to enhance new aquafarmer success

Han-Ping Wang, Paul O'Bryant, Herbert Quintero Fonseca, Dean Rapp and Hong Yao

Ohio Center for Aquaculture Research and Development, The Ohio State University South Centers
1864 Shyville Road, Piketon, OH 45661, wang.900@osu.edu

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

INNOVATIVE APPROACH

3-I Levels

- **Intensive:** In-depth level involving a year-long hands-on training and mentoring program
- **Intermediate:** Mid-level involving participation in a variety of learning activities
- **Introductory:** General level where sharing of information is the goal

3 Areas

- General aquaculture
- Aquaponics
- Related business & marketing

3 Types

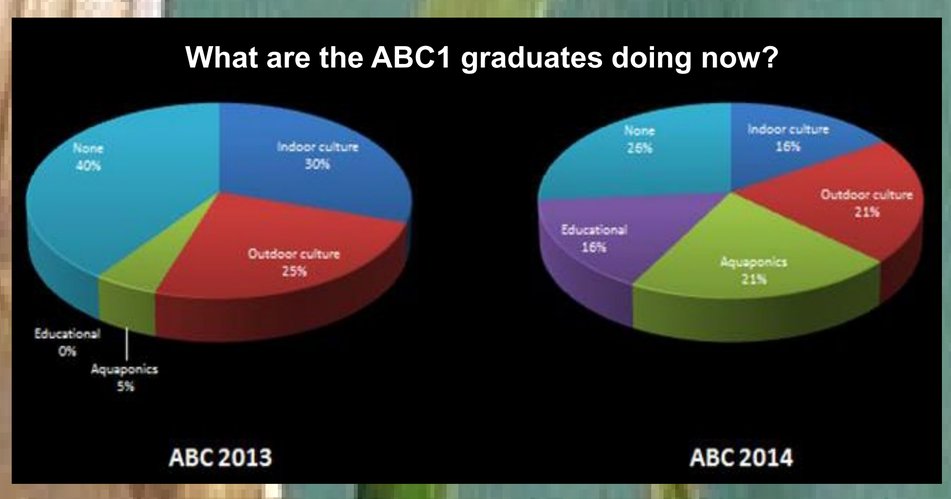
- Hands-on
- Classroom/mentoring
- Internet/webinar



ACHIEVEMENTS & IMPACTS

ABC-1

- Intensive: 50 students recruited and 40 graduated
- Intermediate: 762 students trained
- Introductory: 3,119 people involved and gained knowledge
- 18 participants received mentored internships
- 24 new businesses/farms created



SPECIAL AUDIENCE

- Beginning and new aquaculture/Aquaponic farmers with less than 10 years of any farming experience
- Other new farmers attempting to diversify their existing farming enterprise
- Potential future aquaculture farmers: students and those without a family farming history
- Educators and others who influence the farming decisions made by potential fish farmers



OBJECTIVES

- Deliver intensive classroom courses and on-farm practice to new aquaculture/aquaponic and limited resource farmers through ABC Intensive training.
- Provide extensive classroom courses and on-farm practice mentoring to an additional new and limited resource aqua-farmers through ABC Intermediate workshops
- Provide support and training to all the target audiences through ABC Introductory tools
- Establish an Aquaculture/Aquaponic Internship Program to mentor new and limited farmers in the Midwest
- Provide mentoring leadership and guidance for new and limited resource aqua-farmers through ABC–OAA magazine and newsletters

ABC-2

- 105 limited resource fish farmers and aquaponic producers were trained through the Intensive program
- 849 new and beginning farmers gained knowledge of aquaculture & aquaponic production by participating in Intermediate workshops.
- 3,573 participants gained new knowledge by accessing ABC Introductory tools
- 21 new businesses/farms have been created

ABC-3 Progress

- 3 states – Ohio, Kentucky and West Virginia.
- 48 qualified students have been recruited into ABC-3 intensive program in Ohio and Kentucky
- 210 new and beginning farmers gained knowledge of aquaculture & aquaponic production by participating in Intermediate workshops.
- ~1000 participants gained new knowledge by accessing ABC Introductory tools
- 12 aquaponics systems have been established by participants through this program.



Aquaculture Boot Camp (ABC)

Use a multi-faceted process to improve production success of new and beginning aquaculture/ aquaponic farmers.

Acknowledgments: This work was supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture NIFA (Award N0. 2012-49400-19760; 2016-70017-25377; 2023-70017-41375)