

Louisiana's Pearl: Visioning Our Future A Workshop for the Louisiana Oyster Industry

JUNE 17, 2026

LSU AgCenter's Iberia Research Station
603 LSU Bridge Rd., Jeanerette, Louisiana

9:00 am – 4:30 pm



9:00 – 9:30 am **Pre-Registration Check-in and Morning Refreshments**

(refreshments available throughout the day)

9:30 – 9:50 am **Welcome and Conference Overview**

Louisiana Oyster Task Force ● LSU AgCenter ● Seafood Processing Demonstration Lab ● Louisiana Sea Grant

9:50 – 11:30 am **A Conversation: Our Changing Coastal Habitats – What YOU (Commercial Oyster Fishers) are Seeing Where You Routinely Fish**

- East of Mississippi River and Biloxi Marsh ● Barataria ● Timbalier/Terrebonne
- Atchafalaya/Vermillion ● Calcasieu Lake

An Opportunity to Meet Your State Agencies that Govern Your Traditional and AOC Fisheries

11:30 am – Noon **Louisiana Workforce Development**

Noon - 12:45 pm **Lunch Provided**

12:45 - 1:30 pm **Markets: Imports, Exports, and Domestic Sales**

Formal Presentations

- Import and Export Supply Chain in U.S. and Abroad
- Oyster Fishery Demographics and Louisiana and Gulf States' Sales

General Audience Discussion

1:30 - 3:00 pm **Markets: Consumer Needs, Preferences, and Future Challenges**

How Restaurateurs, Local Oyster Businesses, and Oyster Processors see Customer Preferences and Demands for Product Types

General Audience Discussion

3:00 – 3:30 pm **An Oyster Farm Experience in Mexico (an Exporter to U.S.)**

3:30 - 3:45 pm **Break**

3:45 - 4:15 pm **Introduction to the Seafood Processing Demonstration Lab**

4:15 – 4:30 pm **Summary Comments and Adjourn**

YOU MUST PRE-REGISTER FOR WORKSHOP

Registration is Free (scan)



(Limited Room Capacity, so register early)

To guarantee a lunch

You will need to register by June 5, 2026



Have a question? Call Earl Melancon at 985-859-1300

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A Workshop for the Louisiana Oyster Industry

Workshop Participants

Welcome and Workshop Overview :

Michael Pontiff, Director, **Iberia Research Station**; Thomas Hymel, Executive Director, **Seafood Processing Demonstration Lab**; Mitch Jurisich, Chair, **Louisiana Oyster Task Force**; Earl Melancon, Workshop Coordinator, **Louisiana Sea Grant**.

A Conversation: Our Changing Coastal Habitats and Opportunity to Meet State Agencies

Moderators: Jeff Plumlee (**Sea Grant/LSU**) & Earl Melancon (**Sea Grant**)

Panel Members: **LDWF** = Patrick Banks, Robert Cabellaro, Ty Lindsey; **CPRA** = Brian Lezina; **LDH** = Jennifer Armentor, Chris Lemaire; **LAF** = Gene Cavalier; **Sea Grant** = Elizabeth Robinson.

Louisiana Workforce Development

Presenter: Elizabeth Robinson (**Sea Grant**).

Markets: Imports, Exports, and Domestic Sales

Moderators: Thomas Hymel (**LSUAg/Sea Grant**) & Geoffrey Stewart (**Univ. La. Lafayette**).

Presenters: Dan Petrolia (**Mississippi State University**); Jack Isaacs (**LDWF**).

Markets: Consumer Needs, Preferences, and Future Challenges

Moderators: Jim Gossen (**Louisiana Foods, Inc.** (retired) & Rusty Gaudé (**LSUAg/Sea Grant**)

Panel Members: David Bertrand (**Shucks Restaurants**); Micah Martello (**Prestige Oysters**); Albert "Buzzy" Besson (**Barataria Beauties Oyster Farm**); Jenny (Voisin) Ancar and Scott Ancar (**Jenny V's Seafood**); Brandi and Terry Shelley (**Terry's Oysters**); Toby Voisin (**Wilson's Oysters**); Willie Daisy (**W&E Oysters**); John Tesvich (**Ameripure Oysters**); Steve Voisin (**Motivatit Seafoods**).

An Oyster Farm Experience in Mexico (an Exporter to U.S.)

Presenter: Thomas Hymel (**LSUAg/Sea Grant**).

Introduction to the Seafood Processing Demonstration Lab

Presenters: Anne Dugas (**LSUAg**); Thomas Hymel (**LSUAg/Sea Grant**); Evelyn Watts (**Sea Grant/LSU**)

Chefs for the Day: Anne Dugas (**LSUAg**); Thomas Hymel (**LSUAg/Sea Grant**); Evelyn Watts (**Sea Grant/LSU**).

Audio Visual Aid: Wood Oglesby (**Sea Grant**); Lane Miller (**LSUAg**); Roy Kron (**Sea Grant**).

Statement:

We are a national leader in domestic oyster production. The traditional wild-caught Louisiana oyster has been in commercial commerce for over 200 years as a fishery, and now we see an up-and-coming off-bottom cage culture fishery developing within our industry. But we are not without concerns as our industry continues to evolve due to changing consumer preferences, advanced food technology innovations that require us to always stay vigilant, changing regulatory requirements, the potential for increased competition from imports, and a changing workforce, to name just a few. Added to those commerce challenges are our changing estuarine habitat conditions that can potentially influence oyster spat recruitment, survival, and eventual harvest.

Three events created opportunities that have the potential to help the Louisiana Oyster Industry as well as all fisheries: (1) the April 17, 2025, Presidential Executive Order 14276, "Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness," (2) the May 16, 2025, LDWF Secretary Tyler Bosworth's letter to U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Howard Lutnick, stressing the need for Presidential Executive Order 14276 to address the Louisiana shrimp, finfish, and oyster industries, and (3) the recently created "Office of Seafood" within the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

It is time for us to meet and discuss our industry. We must remain competitive and vigilant in this ever-changing world of commerce and coastal habitats.