Community Supported Fishery (CSF)

The Model: Comprehensive Business Feasibility Study

Troy Hartley, VASG Director
Community Supported Fishery (CSF)

Community Supported Agriculture model

- CSF members pre-pay for a season’s “share”
- Regular supply of X lbs of products
- Local, fresh supply
- Connecting communities with local food system—sustainability

- Ecological, Economic & Social Sustainability
CSF: The VIMS-W&M Model

Comprehensive Business Feasibility Study

VASG—VIMS—W&M Mason School of Business—W&M Law School

- B-School: Market research course
- VASG/B-School Summer Intern: Market research
- Law School/B-School/W&M Undergrad/VASG: Case studies
- VASG/VIMS: Supply-side focus groups & outreach
- Business plan development: workshop/course

W&M Committee on Sustainability—Green Fees Award
CSF: The VIMS-W&M Model

Comprehensive Business Feasibility Study

Advisory Group

- CSF – North Carolina (Walking Fish)
- CSF – UC Santa Barbara
- LocalCatch.org – National association
- Williamsburg waterman
- VA Tech Cooperative Extension (2)
CSF: Feasibility Study

Market Research Course—interviews, survey (>600)

- Consumer segments—W&M, VIMS, community
- Attitudes and perceptions about seafood, sustainability, local fish, wild caught and aquaculture
- Barriers and incentives for joining a CSF
CSF: Feasibility Study

Market Research Course—interviews, survey (>600)

- Generally not familiar with CSF
- Freshness (time to catch, location) and Taste are critical; sustainability secondary

**VASG-W&M Mason Business School Sustainability Intern**

- Expand the community sample
- Further analysis of the market data—niche market/low hanging fruit...
- VIMS students on an attitude & perception manuscript

- ~350 want to participate (higher if 1-month trial)
CSF: Feasibility Study

Case Studies—Organizational Design

VASG Sustainability Fellow

- Continue the case study analysis

Preliminarily:
- Consumer market is already viable
- Unique features our CSF—variety of product
- Processing/handling & cooking—restaurants, country clubs, dining services
CSF: Feasibility Study

Supply-side Focus Groups—Gatekeepers

VASG Roll-out

- Several have contacted us expressing interest
- Request for Qualifications, public meetings—VASG as science broker, not appropriate to compete
- Consumer segments that will be more difficult for private sector to reach—W&M undergraduates, grads
- Handling and cooking demonstrations
CSF: Feasibility Study

Next Steps

- Continued analysis over summer
- Consultation with Advisory Group over summer
- Assess local food distribution network
- Prepare business plan options
  - Continued roll-out to industry
  - Capitalize on momentum—CSF by next summer
CSF: Feasibility Study

Closing comments

- Big Picture: Greater level of market analysis than any of the existing CSFs
- Cross-School teams very powerful
- Schools are very receptive to a compelling idea
- Opportunity in this model….and in the CSF
Community Supported Fishery