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Health & Welfare

Canadian firm to develop rapid disease test for fish and shellfish aquaculture

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Onda secures funding to develop rapid test for faster, cost-effective disease detection in fish and shellfish

Onda, a Canadian contract research organization focused on aquaculture health and innovation, has secured funding to develop rapid diagnostic kits for detecting and managing diseases in fish and shellfish.

The funding, awarded through Innovation PEI's competitive Ignition Fund program, supports early-stage ventures developing novel products or technologies. Onda's project seeks to address a longstanding challenge in the aquaculture sector: the lack of reliable, on-site tools for quickly identifying pathogens.

By developing portable, user-friendly test kits, the company hopes to provide aquaculture producers with a faster, more efficient way to monitor animal health and respond to emerging threats, without relying solely on centralized laboratories.

"Aquaculture is a vital industry for Atlantic Canada, and ensuring the health of farmed fish and shellfish is essential for sustainability and economic growth," said Myrna Gillis, CEO of Onda. "This grant from the Ignition Fund allows us to accelerate the development of rapid, reliable diagnostic solutions that will empower producers with real-time health monitoring tools."

Onda has secured funding to develop rapid diagnostic kits for detecting and managing diseases in fish and shellfish. Photo courtesy of Onda Research.

(https://bspcertification.org/)

Traditional disease detection in aquaculture typically depends on laboratory testing – a process that can be both time-consuming and expensive. Onda's approach offers a faster, more cost-effective alternative, enabling early detection and proactive management of outbreaks. The goal is to minimize losses and strengthen the overall resilience of the industry.

The research and development efforts supported by the Ignition Fund will take place at Onda's facility in Souris, PEI. The company plans to collaborate with key stakeholders, including industry partners, government agencies and academic researchers, to refine and validate the technology before bringing it to market.

“We are grateful for the support of Innovation PEI and the Ignition Fund as we continue our mission to advance aquaculture science,” added Dr. Jordan Poley, Director of LabTech at Onda and the team member leading the development of the rapid diagnostic test kits. “This funding is a testament to the potential of our research to drive meaningful impact in the industry.”

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