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# Is the snack market the secret to growing America's seaweed farming industry?

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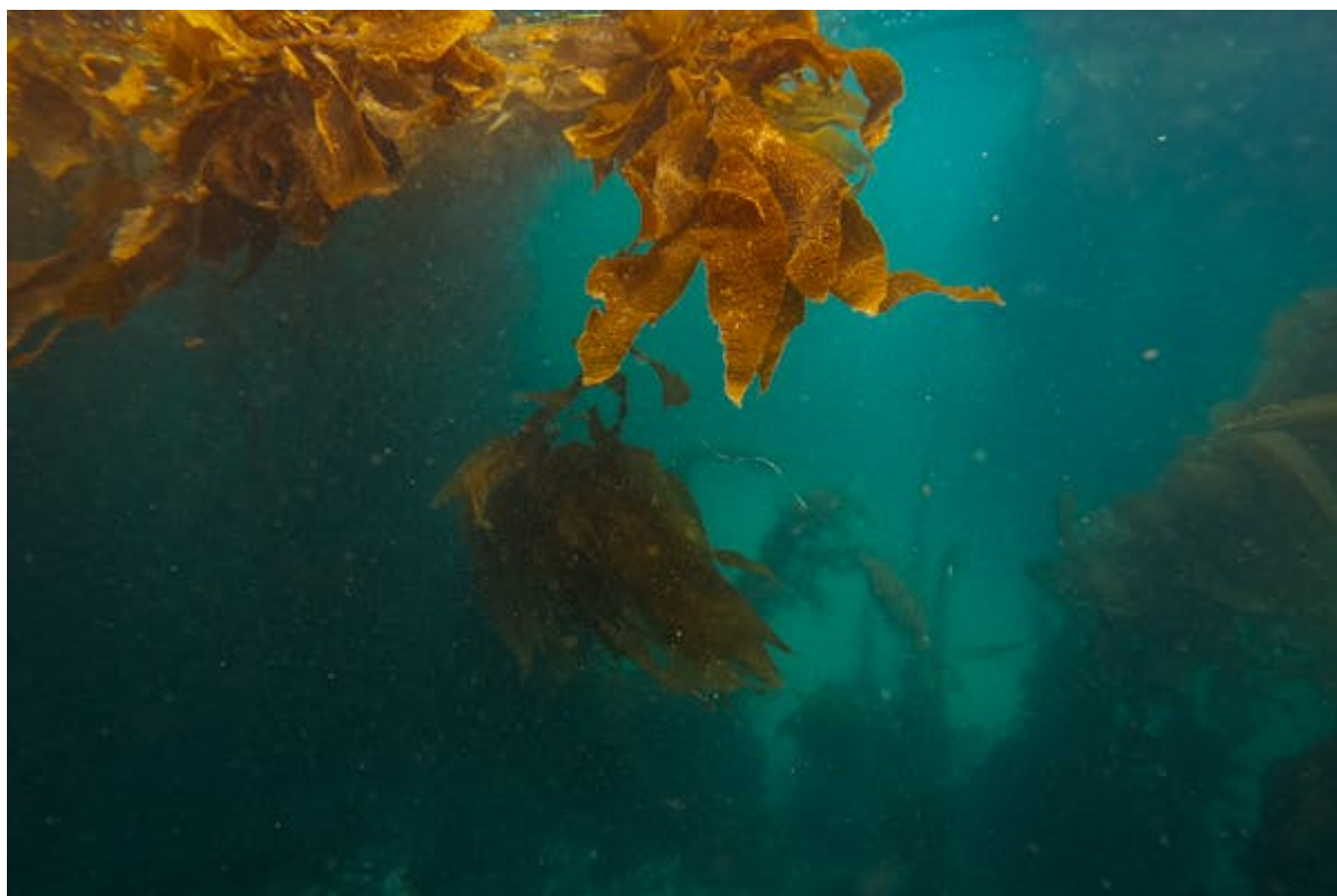
By Responsible Seafood Advocate

## Ready-to-eat seaweed added to familiar foods can drive consumer appeal, according to Maine Aquaculture Association survey

Seaweed snacks may hold the key to expanding America's seaweed farming industry, according to a **new national report** (<https://maineaqua.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/MAA-Seaweed-Consumer-Preferences-Survey-Report-1.pdf>) on consumer preferences.

Released by the Maine Aquaculture Association, the report offers new insights on U.S. consumer preferences for edible seaweed, which could help the country's emerging seaweed farming industry gain ground with American buyers.

The report tackled a key question for the sector: who wants to eat seaweed, how do they want to eat it and why? The findings show strong interest in ready-to-eat products that incorporate seaweed into familiar foods, with younger consumers driving the demand.



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The results provide a clear roadmap for producers looking to grow the domestic market. As seaweed farming in Maine continues to expand, the report aims to guide producers in overcoming market barriers and developing products that resonate with consumers.

A horizontal banner with a dark blue background. On the left, there are two small images: a person in a yellow protective suit and mask, and a fishing boat on the ocean. To the right of these images, the text reads "A comprehensive solution for the wild seafood supply chain." Further right, there are three checkmarks with corresponding text: "Crew rights", "Food safety", and "Environmental responsibility". On the far right, there is a logo for "Best Seafood Practices" which includes a stylized eye icon and the text "Best Seafood Practices". Below the logo is a button that says "LEARN MORE" with a right-pointing arrow.

(<https://bspcertification.org/>).

"This research helps answer the questions we hear from seaweed producers every day," said Christian Brayden, project manager at the Maine Aquaculture Association and lead author of the report. "There's growing excitement around seaweed as a sustainable, tasty and nutritious ingredient."

As the seaweed industry scales up, consumer acceptance is emerging as a critical factor in unlocking broader benefits – from revitalizing Maine's working waterfronts to supporting fishermen who rely on seaweed farming to diversify their income.

The same holds true for the success of innovative, mission-driven food companies entering the space. Without a clear understanding of U.S. consumer interest, much of this potential could go untapped. The report takes a closer look at which seaweed products are most likely to appeal to American buyers and identifies the consumer segments most open to trying them.



## Lean and green, what's not to love about seaweed?

Grown for hundreds of years, seaweed (sugar kelp, specifically) is the fruit of a nascent U.S. aquaculture industry supplying chefs, home cooks and inspiring fresh and frozen food products.



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To explore consumer preferences, Brayden surveyed 2,035 consumers nationwide, asking about their willingness to buy 10 seaweed-infused products and gathering insights on seafood habits, demographics and purchase motivations.

The results show consumers prefer seaweed added to familiar foods – like teriyaki sauce or seaweed-dusted chips – with ready-to-eat snacks generating the most interest. Health benefits played a supporting role in consumer choices, but aren't the main driver, and buyers under 45 show the strongest interest in seaweed products.

The findings offer guidance for companies looking to grow the U.S. seaweed market. By pinpointing the most appealing product formats and target audiences, the report provides a roadmap for future product development, marketing strategies and consumer education aimed at expanding seaweed's presence on the American plate.

"Expanding demand for seaweed strengthens the entire value chain – from ocean farmers to processors to the vibrant coastal communities they support," said Brayden. "With the right strategies, seaweed can go from niche to mainstream."

The full report can be found [here \(https://maineaqua.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/MAA-Seaweed-Consumer-Preferences-Survey-Report-1.pdf\)](https://maineaqua.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/MAA-Seaweed-Consumer-Preferences-Survey-Report-1.pdf), and a two-page infographic that summarizes the report and figures can be found [here \(https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A\\_\\_maineaqua.org\\_wp-2Dcontent\\_uploads\\_2025\\_04\\_MAA-2DSeaweed-2DConsumer-2DPreferences-2Din-2Dthe-2DUS-2DTwo-2DPager.pdf&d=DwMFaQ&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A\\_Cdp gnVfiiMM&r=rtRjQmh6QHjJzFvooyJx\\_CQs4B8PpwJlrJdAKUdiqkw&m=QxERRIUtYmP9cm-acJxoNv\\_Xo3TGvBMpM-yfSZuBRHGFJeVqM5WhS4FHswt9mRYf&s=38mwrPcaAJzK-YYB8t17t9RK1BV4bNa\\_10x48u-EOKA&e=\).](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__maineaqua.org_wp-2Dcontent_uploads_2025_04_MAA-2DSeaweed-2DConsumer-2DPreferences-2Din-2Dthe-2DUS-2DTwo-2DPager.pdf&d=DwMFaQ&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_Cdp gnVfiiMM&r=rtRjQmh6QHjJzFvooyJx_CQs4B8PpwJlrJdAKUdiqkw&m=QxERRIUtYmP9cm-acJxoNv_Xo3TGvBMpM-yfSZuBRHGFJeVqM5WhS4FHswt9mRYf&s=38mwrPcaAJzK-YYB8t17t9RK1BV4bNa_10x48u-EOKA&e=).)

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