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Aquaculture firm wins its largest grant to date

BY [PETER VAN ALLEN](#)

3/9/2015

A Brunswick aquaculture company has received a \$658,000 federal innovation grant, it said Monday.

Acadia Harvest Inc., which is based at 14 Industrial Parkway in Brunswick, will use a controlled environment to study how aspects of aquaculture can be applied to land-based agriculture. The grant, from the National Science Foundation, went into effect March 1 and is estimated to fund research through February 2017.

“This is our largest grant to date,” Edward Robinson, a founder and chief business officer for Acadia Harvest, told Mainebiz. Prior to this, the largest grant had been \$270,000, “so this takes us to a whole other level.”

Research will be led by principal investigator Taylor Pryor, another founder and chief scientist at the firm. The third founder and principal at the firm is Christopher Heinig, CEO.

Acadia applied for the grant in January 2014, and in the subsequent 14 months provided more than 200 pages of documentation needed to secure funding, Robinson said.

Researchers will create land-based conditions favorable to raising two warm-water species, California yellowtail and black sea bass, which each have strong demand in white-tablecloth restaurants and supermarkets, Robinson said.

The NSF said the project “will demonstrate an entirely new approach to farming seafood” by using technology that requires salt water and a “zero waste” approach, “to break away from dependency on oceans for seafood production.”

Acadia Harvest, which was formed in 2011, has just three full-time employees. It works in partnership with the University of Maine and the Center for Cooperative Aquaculture Research in Franklin, where the work will be performed.

“Because such facilities are not in the ocean, seafood culture will no longer be restricted by certain naturally ideal habitats, competition for space, strict environmental regulations, occasional pollution and hazardous weather,” the NSF said in a document describing the grant.

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