



The Aquaponics Association
1240 Evarts St, NE
Washington, DC 20018
www.aquaponicsassociation.org

July 14, 2021

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
United States Secretary of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

This letter is to request that you ensure aquaponic farmers are prioritized in the USDA's Build Back Better Initiative.

Aquaponics is a food production system integrating fish and plants in a closed, soil-less system. Aquaponic farms are growing rapidly across our nation, but more work is needed to expand the benefits of this revolutionary growing method.

Aquaponic food production systems produce more food, on less land, using less water than conventional food production systems and they directly align with the stated goals of the USDA's Build Back Better Initiative:

A Food System That Is Fair, Competitive, Distributed, and Resilient

Historically, agricultural production was in areas with specific climate and soil conditions. However, aquaponics does not require soil and is practiced in controlled environments like greenhouses or re-purposed factories. Aquaponics can be applied in food deserts, in areas without arable soil or in extreme climates. This means that aquaponics offers fresh food and economic opportunities to every state in our nation.

A Food System That Supports Health with Access to Healthy, Affordable Food

The United States' current food supply is characterized by long transportation distances, excessive food waste, nutrient depletion, and overly processed food. Aquaponics offers fresh fruits, vegetables, and fish in any location.

The Aquaponics Association is a Member-based organization that expands the practice of aquaponics through education, advocacy, and connection

A Food System That Advances Climate Resilience

Aquaponic systems are typically operated in controlled environments that can withstand climate fluctuations and extreme weather events. Aquaponic farms have operated through northern blizzards and southern heat waves without affecting production.

A Food System That Advances Climate Mitigation

Today's food system is a major driver of greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. The closed, recirculating nature of aquaponic systems means that food is grown with minimal inputs as well as minimal agricultural discharge. These factors reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with traditional agriculture per unit of output.

The Initiative should recognize changing consumer trends and align with what US citizens want: fresh, locally grown, sustainable foods that promote a healthy lifestyle.

Please contact us if you would like to discuss how aquaponics can add to the USDA's Build Back Better Initiative or if you would like to arrange aquaponic farm tours for USDA staff.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Brian Filipowich, Chairman
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