

# **WHY DOES AMERICA HAVE ZERO COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION OF WARM WATER MARINE FISH USING MARICULTURE/AQUACULTURE IN 2025?**

This document is an opinion of what has happened to this farming sector, in the opinion of Michael F. McMaster, CEO at Pompano Farms, LLC, over the last 50 years.

These opinions are limited to Mr. McMaster direct commercial investments for farming the Florida Pompano starting in 1972 and outlined at [www.pompanofarms.com](http://www.pompanofarms.com)

Starting in 1965 and progressing through to 1975 there was great industrial interest in figuring out how to create and control the vertically integrated technical methods for the farming of the Florida Pompano. By my estimates, there was in excess of one hundred million dollars invested by many private commercial firms during that period. Only one emerged in the early 1970s and that firm was called OMI, Inc which was a publicly traded business. The other firms fell by the wayside due to lack of ability to create the farming methods for this species. That technology was created by myself while serving as senior scientist and V.P. for Research and Development. For in-depth information on this subject, go to the website and read the paper that I wrote for the UN/FAO on the history of Florida pompano farming. Here was the start of the problem and answer to why America does not farm its own farmed finfish seafood. OMI, Inc. and its primary backer, Prudential Life Insurance, Inc., attempted to commercialize its science for grow out farming of Florida pompano in sea cages. This approach was designed to establish a leased zone for the anchoring of floating cages at least three miles off shore of North Key Largo, Florida. As is true today, the company had to apply for permits to do that. Permits were not forthcoming after numerous conversations

with both the State of Florida and the Federal Agencies that took on the responsibility to accommodate this new farming industry. It soon became clear that applying for a use permit was a dead-end. Therefore, the company started searching the Caribbean area for a friendly Country that would accept the building and associated investment and jobs for this new farm. The country that happily accepted this company was the Dominican Republic. There the world's first vertically integrated, self-sustaining pompano farm was built. That project is described in more detail at our website. With this short history, it should start to become clear to the readers that the obstacle to having American made marine farmed fish is the GOVERNMENT and not available farming science.

Post the mid-1970s, the Government (State and Federal) actually saw a new opportunity to lobby for their funding to have a look at this new mariculture industry. What they found back then was a public interest in this new farming industry. That translated to congress appropriating funds to their agencies with the goal to figure out how to approve and regulate it. This spawned a new and growing federal and state bureaucracy to, quote, "help these tax paying industries get launched". In my opinion as an insider for some 50 years, I suspect this thinking shift originated in our universities and associated government laboratories. The shift, during decades in prior years in America, the regulating polices were managed by what we all called conservationism. The multiple managed uses of Americas natural resources. The new and aggressive definition for managing the uses of Americas natural resources was now called preservationism. In my view this came about by a huge ground swell of arm chair marine biology experts in universities, government labs, and NGO's that have not spent any time studying the near shore oceans. It was all about funding their bureaucracy and their jobs. Their ruling assumption is, apparently, the world's oceans are not capable of digesting anymore fish waste. This leads one to believe that the trillions of pounds of biomass in the world oceans must not create new metabolic waste. Like there is no natural system to effectively handle any more waste. This is scientific insanity. But of course, there is an issue with high

metabolic waste output in small confined areas but proper site selection will mitigate any over fertilization of the benthic areas.

Post 1990, there was zero consideration by industry to attempt to spend the money and time to apply for permits to farm warm water fish in cages anywhere off the thousands of coastal miles around the southern USA. At that time NOAA and NMFS folks were trying to bait industry into applying for permits while it was clear that no permit will ever be issued. So, what was Governments next big solution for industry to be able to farm these species? They call it RAS (recirculating aquaculture systems). Taking it one step further they required that the RAS farms cannot emit any organic waste. This endeavor is the dumbest commercial approach to attempt to economically farm warm water marine fish ever perpetrated on American fish farmers. These employees that work for these bureaucracy's clearly have never operated a profitable farm or business in their entire lives. But they sure know how to spend our money on themselves and their useless projects. These agencies have totally lost their original mandates for managing our agriculture and use of natural resources. It is no longer managed for the multiple uses of Americas natural resources, that was too hard, so instead it is easier to just ban that original mandate and assume their new jobs are to protect natural resources from humans. To do that, just make more complicated, poorly thought-out rules. This point can be carried on forever it seems but the bottom line for America is you have no warm water home-grown finfish seafood. Many people ask me "what is the solution" and I say, first, we have to remove all the existing managerial employees at these agencies, expunge their poisoned ideologies and get back to what works creating profitable fish farms. Lastly, many people ask me where in the world can pompano farming be done? My first answer is never in America under this regime. My second answer is the eastern shore of central Mexico.

