



DEPARTMENT of AGRICULTURE
STATE OF MISSOURI
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*Serving, promoting and protecting the agricultural producers, processors
and consumers of Missouri's food, fuel and fiber products.*

October 15, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

Osage Catfisheries Incorporated is an innovative family-owned aquaculture business that has developed sustainable production methods to produce caviar; and they are well known by the Missouri Department of Agriculture. They have developed techniques and a business model that will help safeguard protected and endangered fish species nationally and globally.

Founded in 1953, they have produced many species of fish through the years and began producing paddlefish in 1981. The founder, Jim Kahrs, was well known by many in the agriculture community and was instrumental in beginning the Missouri Aquaculture Association in 1963. Mr. Kahrs has passed but the family farming operation continues with sons Steve and Pete. They have continued the company's vision of sustainable caviar production. The active CITES permit with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service since 1993, is a testament to their stewardship and credibility.

Their paddlefish are privately-raised and have some benefits that wild caught fish do not. First, their fish are unique to them since they have identified the bloodline of their fish and a DNA marker with the help of Northwest Missouri State University. Second, their paddlefish production has no impact on paddlefish populations in Missouri's rivers and public lakes. Lastly, their fish generate income not just for fishermen but the landowners who enroll their water bodies in the paddlefish ranching program.

Their fish are produced and harvested in an environmentally sustainable manner. The fish are first hatched and farm-raised by Osage Catfisheries and then ranched in privately owned bodies of water. The ranching phase lasts years but during this period, no supplemental feed is used. Further, the waters in which they are raised are existing private impoundments that can continue to serve their intended purposes. The fish are easily harvested with nets so the water can be conserved. Their paddlefish ranching program is one that is beneficial to the environment, landowners, and their caviar customers.

If you ever need assistance from the Missouri Department of Agriculture, please let us know.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Allison". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steve Allison, Director
Ag Business Development Division