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Intelligence

Florida permits recirculating red drum farm led by former Kingfish Maine manager

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Area boasts high-quality seawater and a natural sand filter

Pine Island Redfish, a new business on its namesake island in southwest Florida, will soon begin producing red drum (*Sciaenops ocellatus*) in a recirculating aquaculture system (RAS).

The company will be headed by Megan Sorby, former operations manager at Kingfish Maine, on a 150-acre property that fulfills a lot of the necessary requirements for a land-based aquaculture system to succeed. The application underwent review and successful approval by all relevant local, state and federal agencies.

“In studying sites for this farm, we were directed to Pine Island, Florida, as a home for both terrestrial agriculture as well as aquaculture,” said Sorby, the new CEO. “We looked at multiple locations and found a property that provides all the key elements for our project while most importantly working within Pine Island’s desire to maintain its natural and undeveloped farm feel.”

Pine Island is home to an array of tropical fruit, citrus groves and palm tree farms. Unique geologic conditions of South Florida provide the opportunity to access high-quality seawater through the



Megan Sorby is the new CEO of Pine Island Redfish, which will soon begin producing red drum (*Sciaenops ocellatus*) in a recirculating aquaculture system (RAS).

ground's natural sand filter, Sorby explained.



(<https://aceaquatec.com/aquaculture-products/grow/a-biomass>).

“Previous farming activities on the property as well as the general location and site-specific characteristics are allowing us to establish operations with engineering that meets the goals we are all striving to achieve in the blue economy including water efficient technologies and climate resilience strategies,” said Sorby. “We are able to process effluent on site and recycle its nutrient profile for other applications that create a more circular food system.”

Pine Island is also home to American Penaeid, a leading provider of vannamei broodstock as well as harvest to market.

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