

# FOCUSMAINE

A CATALYST TO GROW SELECT SIGNATURE INDUSTRIES



**AUGUST 2019**

Summer is here and FocusMaine's work is heating up! We hope you're as inspired as we are by the extraordinary people and organizations working together to grow great careers and competitive industries across our state.

## Summer Interns, Taking the State by Storm!

Grace Robie is one of more than 600 summer interns, from 40 Maine employers, taking part in the 2019 FocusMaine Intern Experience. A senior at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick, Canada, Grace has one of the coolest internships in Maine this summer. She is working at the Department of Marine Resources learning the science of aquaculture with support from the SEANET program at the Aquaculture Research Institute, an effort funded by the National Science Foundation. This complements her studies in environmental sciences. As part of the third cohort of the FocusMaine Intern Experience, Grace is also learning about other employment opportunities within the state, strengthening her professional skills, and exploring Maine's uniquely rich quality of life.

Grace commutes to the northern coastal region of Maine every day, gathering samples of mussels and clams for routine monitoring. Alongside her team of three, Grace prepares the shellfish for lab processing and works on compiling comparative data that will be shared with key stakeholders at the end of the summer. Grace's work ensures that Maine's reputation for pristine seafood remains a hallmark of the rapidly growing aquaculture industry within the state.

Grace, a Mainer from Holden, seized the opportunity to join the FocusMaine Intern Experience because, as she said, "Maine is my home. My family is here, and I wanted to be a part of the activities and learning with other interns." Grace participated with 50 FocusMaine interns in a popular social networking event, the Mount Battie Hike & Lobster Roll Lunch in Camden. Exploring a new part of Maine, enjoying the scenery and connecting with interns working throughout the state are highlights for Grace.

Grace's story is one of the many examples of extraordinary young interns who wish to call Maine home and are continuously growing a stronger attachment to our state—one that we hope lasts a lifetime. Working with Educate Maine, our internship program is designed to help address Maine's workforce challenges, create excitement about opportunities across the state, and grow business within our signature sectors.

—Story by Meredith Duffy,  
FocusMaine Intern Experience Intern at Educate Maine.



Photo Credit: Jeff Kirlin

“**Maine is my home and the opportunity to join activities and learning with my peers was very exciting.**”

**Grace Robie, Intern, Aquaculture Research Institute, Maine Department of Marine Resources**



## A Helping Hand from Scotland

As part of FocusMaine’s aquaculture strategy, we have retained a Scottish firm to help us learn from mature aquaculture economies. With GMRI and the Maine Aquaculture Association, we’re adapting practices from other successful countries. This work is helping us to better understand skills gaps and potential training models that could be used within Maine’s aquaculture industry. A steering committee brings together industry, academic, and program partners to ensure that the findings build on Maine’s existing assets while also generating momentum to meet the demands of this rapidly growing industry. We’re looking forward to using this rich information to map a pathway for more jobs in this sector and to sharing what we’ve learned.

## Growing New Blue Jobs in Maine— One Aquaculture Business at a Time

Oyster, mussel, scallop, kelp, and land-based farming operations can be found all along the Maine coast, growing in response to consumer demand for high quality, fresh, traceable Maine food. It’s not a surprise that aquaculture emerged as one of our signature sectors, given Maine’s deep, cold waters and rich seafood history. This burgeoning “blue economy” means good jobs in sustainable industries, preserving maritime traditions all along Maine’s working waterfronts.

We are developing tools to help small ocean farmers grow their businesses smartly and sustainably. In partnership with the Maine Aquaculture Association, we’re supporting the development of business tools to help early-stage farmers match their business planning and production planning cycles. These tools are grounded in interviews with Maine aquaculture businesses of all sizes and across seven species and growing methods and will begin to be field-tested by Maine’s sea farmers later this year.

To respond to the growing opportunity to develop a resilient Maine economy in aquaculture, FocusMaine is guided by a talented [implementation team](#). You can learn more about the context for growth in aquaculture [here](#).

“It’s not a surprise that aquaculture emerged as one of our signature sectors, given Maine’s cold, deep waters and rich seafood history.”

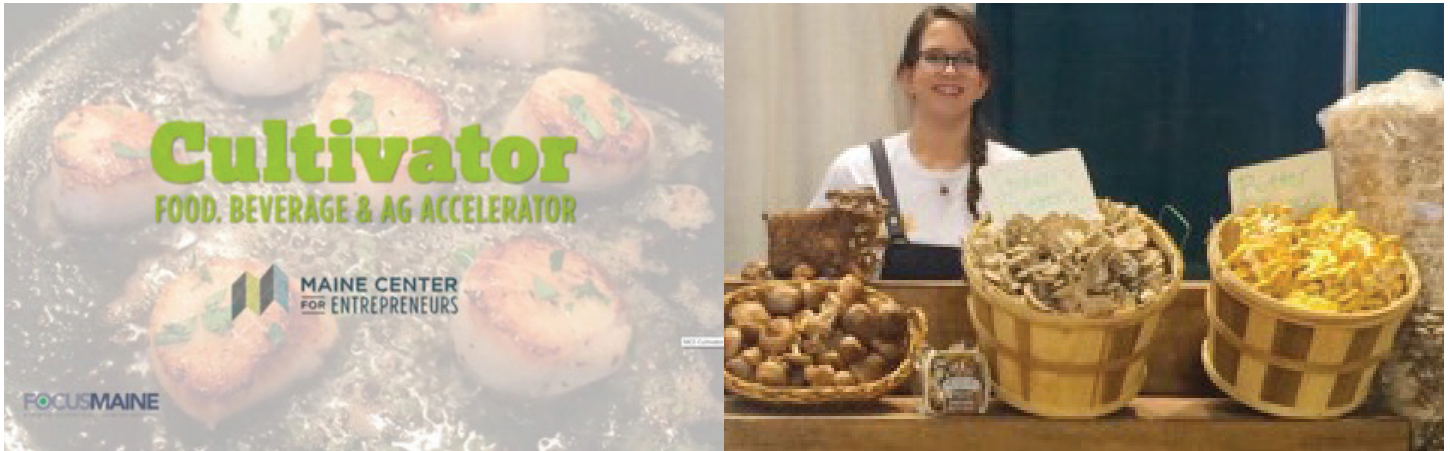
## A Taste of Maine...in Boston

Joel Alex’s [Blue Ox Malthouse](#) was one of twelve Maine food-producing companies that had the opportunity to share their bounty at the Boston Public Market in June, an effort made possible through CEI’s [Maine Tastemakers Initiative](#). This “Day at the Market” was designed to introduce Maine products—from tofu, grain, and kelp to oysters and mushrooms—to new customers, and most importantly, to introduce investors and buyers to exciting new companies within the Maine food economy. This program is part of our overarching strategy to nurture growth-oriented food and beverage companies across the state. Financial resources, market analysis, tailored consulting, mentoring and investor networking opportunities are all part of this effort. Currently, we have nearly twenty Maine companies participating in the Maine Tastemakers Initiative.



## Emerging Maine Food Brands Receive Trade Market Help and More

Our trade marketing strategy is taking flight! The Maine Center for Entrepreneurs (MCE), has launched a new, “MarketShare Accel” program, as part of our strategy to help Maine’s food and beverage companies access regional markets and build strong trade partnerships. MCE’s new collaboration with the national Food Marketing Institute’s [Emerge](#) program was recently signed. This program will aid Maine’s mid-size businesses in product exposure within larger markets, introducing those 150 million consumers within a 24-hour drive of Maine to fresh, quality, Maine foods. Reaching into larger markets means more jobs for Maine.



MCE recently celebrated the graduation of their first class of Cultivator program participants. These [testimonials](#) from Cultivator companies demonstrate the transformational power of this program, which provides participants with hands-on strategic assessment and planning sessions, tailored professional resources, and access to interactive development forums. MCE is now recruiting participants for their next Cultivator class. Learn more [here](#).

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## New Talent Joins the FocusMaine Leadership Table



Ed McKersie, CEO of ProSearch, and founder of Live+Work in Maine, has joined FocusMaine’s Leadership Team. We are thrilled to have Ed join us with his love of all things Maine and extensive knowledge of Maine’s workforce challenges. Ed’s background will help us immensely as we enter this critical period of development at FocusMaine.

FocusMaine’s connection to Maine institutions of higher education is central to our mission. We are delighted to share that Dr. Joan Ferrini-Mundy, President of the University of Maine and the University of Maine at Machias, will chair our Academic Advisory Group and join our Leadership Team in that capacity. Her distinguished career, passion for research and development, and her commitment to put research and talent in service to the state will help fuel our mission.

# FOCUSMAINE LEADERSHIP TEAM

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**Ed McKersie**  
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Former CEO & Chairman,  
Dead River Company

**Robert Moore**  
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FocusMaine is a ten-year, private sector-led initiative to accelerate the creation of 20,000 quality jobs in Maine by investing in three of Maine's most globally competitive and high-growth fields: agriculture, aquaculture, and biopharmaceuticals. Additionally, we are focused on sparking an increase in and return of skilled workers to Maine for these sectors and others.