

Exploring consumer acceptance of seaweed products

6 July 2016, by Amanda Clark

Chantel Banus, second-year master's student in human nutrition at the University of Maine, is working to determine the factors that influence consumer purchase of seaweed products in the United States.

Banus is conducting a survey to see what consumers are looking for in [seaweed](#) products and what influences their decision to purchase them. She wants to inform Maine seaweed farmers and aquaculture industry members in order to better market their products. Her research is advised by Mary Ellen Camire, professor of food science and human nutrition.

"Although seaweed, also known as macroalgae, has long been wild-harvested along the Maine coast, several species now form an emerging [aquaculture industry](#) in the state," said Banus.

Though there are more than 250 species of sea vegetables in the Gulf of Maine, only 11 species of seaweed are commercially harvested.

Banus recently traveled to Washington D.C. to attend a public policy workshop hosted by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She met with Maine legislative offices to discuss nutritional issues such as diabetes, obesity and child nutrition.

"It was rewarding to see dietitians, students and interns from across the country all in one room advocating for our work and the health of America," said Banus, whose interest in human nutrition was sparked in her high school biology class.

At UMaine, Banus has worked closely with Adrienne White, professor and director of the internship program in the School of Food and Agriculture. Part of Banus' graduate work is an accredited dietetic internship, which focuses on nutritional services and professional advocacy.

When she doesn't have her head in the books, Banus can be found at the UMaine New Balance Student Recreation Center doing crossfit, yoga, pilates or running. She also loves to travel.

Hailing from Ashby, Massachusetts, Banus graduated from California State University, Sacramento with a B.S. in dietetics. After she graduates from UMaine in August 2017, she will be qualified to take the National Registration Examination to become a Registered Dietician. Although she is unsure what her future career holds, she aims to find a position that combines her interests in [human nutrition](#) and policy.

Provided by University of Maine

APA citation: Exploring consumer acceptance of seaweed products (2016, July 6) retrieved 15 May 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-07-exploring-consumer-seaweed-products.html>

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