

Md. Seafood Fresh from the Web @ Foodtrader.org

Buying and selling local, Maryland seafood just got easier.

The University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center and the Maryland Department of Agriculture are working together to make a berth for local seafood on the Internet - at the University's virtual farmer's market, Foodtrader.org.

The website now accepts listings of local fish, crabs, oysters and similar products. This makes fresh seafood direct from watermen and aqua-farmers as easy as picking up the phone and placing an order. A free service to buyers and sellers, Foodtrader.org provides instantaneous listings of fresh foods available only from Maryland farms. The idea is to offer consumers the freshest food at competitive prices by connecting them directly with local farmers and now the fishing industry.

Maryland Agriculture Secretary Buddy Hance, says he is thrilled with this new opportunity for producers to reach consumers.

"It's a perfect example of how technology can help our agricultural and seafood industries sell their products directly to consumers," Hance says. "We encourage those with Maryland seafood for sale to list their products on Foodtrader.org and ask those seeking seafood to check it out. This is a great complement to the agency's MarylandBest.net website which lists producers and the types of products they carry."

Foodtrader.org has been in existence for a little over a year and has more than 600 members using the site to buy and sell local produce all year long.

"I feel like I am doing my part to keep the seafood industry here sustainable," says Joanne Throwe, director of the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center and creator of the website. "Buying local should be more than just about fruits and vegetables."

Adding seafood is a natural extension of the current website, Throwe says, and predicts that her member restaurants and general consumers will love the addition of seafood.

Signing up for Foodtrader.org is free to all and acts like a Craig's List for local foods. For more information, please contact Joanne Throwe at 301-405-5036