



9360 Glacier Hwy, Ste 201
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seconference.org
alaskamariculturecluster.org

Trip Report Questionnaire

Agronomy Conference and Expo

August 24, 2026 - August 26, 2026 | Indianapolis, Indiana

Please complete the following and return to karmen@tastemakercomms.com by Aug 31.
You are also encouraged to take and share photos.

- What is your name / your organization?

Jason Lessard, Alaska Mariculture Alliance

- What was the primary value of attending the event? What did you / your organization gain from it?

It was extremely valuable to gain an understanding of the biostimulants landscape by engaging with the broader industry. Up until this point my general understanding of biostimulants revolved around kelp-based products. I'd learned a bit from new AK producers and learned about the market through the perspective of only one single high-volume purchaser of AK biomass. The opportunity to engage with end users like farmers and agronomists, established producers of both kelp and non-kelp based biostimulants, researchers, industry groups and regulators broadened my understanding of both the commercial and regulatory opportunities and challenges that lay ahead for both AK the industry more broadly.

AMA gained a broadened perspective on the biostimulant landscape, contacts in the field and a call to action to support efforts to standardize biostimulant testing, regulation, and categorization.

- What did you learn at the conference that you wish the whole industry knew?

The challenges to growth and trust from the consumer that will continue to befall the biostimulant market without standardization and changes to the regulatory framework.

- How did the conference expand your understanding of the biostimulant market and availability for Alaska kelp? Did you discover any new market opportunities for Alaska kelp biostimulants?

Q1 largely addressed above.

Q2. There were several individuals interested in the samples provided by Kachemak Kelp and Pacific Kelp Co. I spoke with a contracted soil manager who currently uses Acadian product but is interested in trying biostimulant formulated with AK kelp, biostimulant producers interested AK kelp as an ingredients



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- Given what you learned at the conference, where do you see opportunities for Alaska's biostimulant industry? Operations, supply chain logistics, marketing, or strategy, etc.

I believe our small producers will find it difficult to stand out in a very crowded biostimulant market. The lack of standardization and regulation leaves space for lots of snake oil products that are ineffective and may turn off potential users. A potential path AK-based biostimulant producers is the white label market. Differentiation at the cottage level will be difficult outside of the state.

For AK farmers, I do see a viable path through ingredient sales to biostimulant manufacturers but, as ever in AK, competitive pricing will be an evergreen challenge. Farming of species unique to northern Pacific waters could open pathways of opportunity

Challenges aside, other conference attendees showed a big interest in biostimulants and the value they bring. I feel more confident than ever in Alaska's future in the biostimulant market based on testimonials I received while networking.

- Please write a brief recap of your activities at the conference, including particularly interesting speakers and/or activities.
 - There was a great networking event on opening night and networking opportunities built in throughout the conference that were useful and engaging.
 - The Biostimulant Panel Session on 8/26 was worth the price of admission alone. Made up of a researcher, a farmer, a longtime humate biostimulant producer, and a distributor. It was standing room only and super informative. A big chunk of this session helped put into perspective the impact that the lack of standards/regs is currently having on progress.
 - A Session on 4R nutrient Stewardship gave me a better understanding of soil management from a farmers perspective as well as an understanding of the 4R model of nutrient stewardship principles promoted by TFI.
 - Workshop on collaborative fertilizer messaging: presentation by TFI Economist gave me solid insights into current supply chain logistics issues both global and domestic. Table conversation during the workshop portion led to an extremely solid connection with an agronomist that manages hundreds of acres in midwest on behalf of the farmer. He shared lots of insights into how the process works and how he utilizes biostimulants in his process (introduced at work growth stage, which type of biostim for which crop and when, etc.)



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- Did you take advantage of networking opportunities? Please elaborate on any professional connections you established or developed.

Yes, chats with several biostimulant producers who had booths a few fertilizer distributors who are interested in AK products. TFI staff I met clarified the role they play in the larger fertilizer landscape, the TFI Biostimulant Council and how the AK industry might continue to engage with them. Also learned about TFI's Biostimulant certification program which could be of value.

- Would you recommend attending this conference again in the future, or similar conferences?

Yes, I believe there is value in continuing to engage with the base that this conference attracts. I learned a great deal and made several key connections.