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Division of Aquaculture

The core responsibilities of the Division of Aquaculture are described in Chapter 597, Florida Aquaculture Policy Act, Florida Statutes, and include:

- Developing and enforcing environmental and food safety regulations governing commercial aquaculture production and shellfish (clams, oysters and mussels) harvesting and processing, respectively.
- Certifying and inspecting shellfish processing plants and classifying and monitoring shellfish harvest areas in accordance with National Shellfish Sanitation Program.
- Leasing coastal state submerged land for aquacultural purposes.
- Certifying and inspecting upland commercial aquaculture facilities for compliance with the Aquaculture Best Management Practices Rule.
- Providing practical and technical assistance concerning regulations, production, financial assistance, or educational programs.

For the open or closed status of Shellfish Harvesting Areas, call:

Apalachicola Shellfish Center (850) 653-8317
Cedar Key Office (352) 543-5181
Melbourne Office (321) 984-4890
Panama City Office (850) 236-2200
Port Charlotte Office (941) 613-0954
Tallahassee Office (850) 617-7600

For Aquaculture Certificate of Registration, Aquaculture Best Management Practices, call:

Bartow Office (863) 578-1870
Tallahassee Office (850) 617-7600

For the leasing of submerged state lands and shellfish processing certification information, call:

Tallahassee Office (850) 617-7600

Florida Aquaculture

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Division of Aquaculture

Small Business Administration Relief Funding for Hurricane Sally

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has opened up applications for disaster loans for Hurricane Sally. Business physical disaster loans and home disaster loans (filing deadline **December 1, 2020**), and economic injury disaster loans (filing deadline **July 2, 2021**) are available. Business and home loans are available for **Bay, Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton** counties. Economic injury loans are available for **Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson and Washington** counties. For more information and to download the Fact Sheet visit: <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/Declarations/ViewDisasterDocument/4094>

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>. Applicants may also call SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. Individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing may call (800) 877-8339.

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Aquaculture Review Council

The Aquaculture Review Council met on virtually on September 24th to discuss revisions to the Florida Aquaculture Plan. The 2020 Florida Aquaculture Plan was approved and is now up on the Division website at: www.FDACS.gov/content/download/89185/file/Florida-Aquaculture-Plan-2020.pdf.

The Call for Statements of Interest (SOI) for FY 2022-23 funding was released in mid-November and can be found online by visiting the Division's homepage under "Popular Links." The complete list of research priorities considered for funding can be found in the full SOI. Completed applications should be sent to Dr. Marcy Cockrell at Marcy.Cockrell@FDACS.gov no later than 5 pm EST on January 8, 2021. The next ARC meeting will be held virtually January 28th at 9 am and will be open to the public.



Aquaculture Scam Alert

The Division recently sent out a notice about an aquaculture scam alert to certificate holders via email. A Florida aquaculture facility was recently victim of a complex fraud scheme which resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue. An unknown third-party acting as a legitimate and established seafood purchaser operating in Florida contacted the farm to setup a recurring product order. When the purchaser failed to pay after multiple shipments it was discovered that the information the purchaser had provided was fraudulent. FDACS Office of Agriculture Law Enforcement is currently investigating and more details about this specific case is not currently available.

For more information about best practices to avoid fraud, how to verify credentials and how to confirm a business's identity in Florida, please view the notice sent out by the division on November 4, 2020:

www.FDACS.gov/content/download/94240/file/aquaculture-buyer-scam-alert.pdf



2022 Census of Agriculture and the 2023 Census of Aquaculture

The 2022 Census of Agriculture is right around the corner and USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service is making every effort to count all aquaculture producers in the United States. If you produce any aquaculture products and want to make sure that you are counted in the 2022 Census of Agriculture and the 2023 Census of Aquaculture, **please sign up your operation using this online form:** www.agcounts.usda.gov/cgi-bin/counts/. Remember, participating in the 2022 Census of Agriculture and the 2023 Census of Aquaculture is **Your Voice, Your Future, and Your Opportunity**. To learn more about the Census of Agriculture and Aquaculture, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov. All information you provide will be held confidential under penalty of federal law. There is NO sharing of individual farm financial data with other federal agencies other than the final compiled reports that are publicly available. Since surveys are conducted for statistical purposes only, individual reports are protected by law, even from other governmental agencies. If you have any questions, contact Tony Dorn at Tony.Dorn@usda.gov or (202) 690-3223.



Inspector’s Corner: Theft and Boat Awareness Signs Installed Throughout the State

You may notice some new informational signage on the corner markers of some of the large Aquaculture Use Zones (AUZs) in areas like Cedar Key, Horseshoe Beach, Pine Island Sound, Panacea, Alligator Harbor and Apalachicola Bay. The Division has purchased and is installing dozens of these signs in an effort to increase public awareness of high-density lease sites.

Water activities such as swimming, boating and fishing are allowed on aquaculture leases as long as gear is not damaged. Each aquaculture use zone has easements which can be used by the general public for navigating through the lease areas. No shellfish harvesting is permitted within 25 feet of a lease boundary or in easements. Markers, gear and shellfish within each lease are private property. Theft of farmed shellfish or of private agriculture property is a felony, and may result in fines or imprisonment.



We hope these signs will help deter any potential theft of aquaculture equipment and shellfish, as well as inform boaters that there are farms in the area in order to prevent damage to equipment and crops. If you are an individual leaseholder and would like to purchase and install either of these signs (pictured here) on your lease, please email Carrie Jones (Carrie.Jones@FDACS.gov) and she can share details about how to order additional signs.



Division Staff Changes



Nick Moore

Nick Moore joined the Division’s Apalachicola Shellfish Lab as a Laboratory Technician I in October 2020. In this position, he will be assisting with shellfish sanitation and water quality testing. Nick received his Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Sciences from the University of Florida in 2015 and completed his Master of Science degree in Wildlife and Conservation Biology from the University of New Hampshire in 2020. Prior to working for FDACS, he worked a number of years on wildlife survey projects for several private and academic institutions across the southeast. Nick can be reached at (850) 323-6847 or by email at Nick.Moore@FDACS.gov



Tyler Kennell

Tyler Kennell started working with the Division in October 2020 as an Environmental Specialist II in the Certification and Best Management Practices Compliance Program. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in marine biology and aquaculture from Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne. Tyler has previously worked as a fishery observer in Alaska as part of the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program. Tyler is based in the Division’s Bartow office and can be reached at (863) 578-1874 or by email at Tyler.Kennell@FDACS.gov.



Katie Wallace

Katie Wallace started with the Division in October 2020 as an Environmental Specialist III in the Tallahassee office. She will be working on standardizing operating procedures across programs and improving mission functions for the Division. Katie previously worked with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection on coastal projects, then moved into a regulatory role with Everglades restoration. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Florida State University in Environmental Science and Master of Arts degree from University of Rhode Island in Marine Affairs. Katie can be reached at (850) 617-7619 or by email at Katie.Wallace@FDACS.gov.



Destinee Metz

Destinee Metz joined the Division as an Environmental Specialist II in August 2020 for the Certification and Best Management Practices Compliance Program. In this role, she will be conducting inspections of upland aquaculture facilities. Prior to joining the Division, she worked for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at the Florida Bass Conservation Center and for The Walt Disney Company as an Aquaculture Professional Intern. Destinee graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences from Florida Atlantic University. Destinee is based at the Division’s Bartow office and can be reached at (863) 578-1876 or by email at Destinee.Metz@FDACS.gov.

Second Round of USDA Coronavirus Relief Now Open

The second round of funding for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) is now open. CFAP 1 dispersed \$177 million to Florida farms. A total of \$2.8 million was dispersed for aquaculture. Ornamentals were the largest percentage at \$2.3 million (83% of total aquaculture payments). All data on CFAP 1 dispersements can be viewed online at: www.farmers.gov/cfap1/data. Below is the information for CFAP 2, including changes from CFAP 1.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2)	
Funding Authority	Replenishment of \$14 billion in funding from the CARES Act and Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC)
Intended Use	Relief from COVID-19 market disruptions and revenue losses, including price declines, disruptions in supply chains and additional marketing costs
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Any species of aquatic organisms grown as food for human consumption, fish raised as feed for fish that are consumed by humans and ornamental fish propagated and reared in an aquatic medium. Alligators are not eligible as they are not considered aquaculture or livestock by USDA.Eligible aquaculture species must be raised by a commercial operator and in water in a controlled environment.CFAP 2 includes molluscan shellfish and seaweed, which is also covered under the U.S. Department of Commerce relief program.
Payment mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Single direct payment to eligible producers based on 2019 sales of raw commodities. Value-added or products purchased for resale are not eligible.Payment rates are determined based on eligible sales in calendar year 2019. See the table below.
Can I Apply Now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">YES. Applications are being accepted for eligible aquaculture commodities by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) from Sept 21st through Dec 11th. Submit an application online or call ahead to make an appointment with your local FSA office.If you submitted a CFAP application previously, and the application was disapproved, submit a new application through your local FSA office.
For More Information	For more information on the program, including payment rates and how to apply, visit: www.farmers.gov/cfap/aquaculture . FSA service centers can be located by going to: www.farmers.gov/service-locator . You can also contact the Florida FSA headquarters for assistance with locating your regional office by calling (352) 379-4500.

Note: This table is for informational purposes only. The program is subject to change and all information should be verified before applying for assistance. The Department makes no guarantees about any program eligibility, payments or availability of funds.

CFAP 2 Payments for Aquaculture		
2019 Sales Range	Percent Payment Factor *	*Percent Payment Factor is based on the producer's 2019 sales of eligible commodities falling in each range
\$0 to \$49,999	10.6%	Example: A producer's 2019 sales of eligible commodities totaled \$75,000. The payment is calculated as (\$49,999 times 10.6%) plus (\$25,001 times 9.9%) for a total payment of \$7,775.
\$50,000 to \$99,999	9.9%	
\$100,000 to \$499,999	9.7%	
\$500,000 to \$999,999	9.0%	
Sales over \$1 million	8.8%	

New Aquaculture Use Zone established in Apalachicola Bay

Just west of Green Point at “4 Mile” in Apalachicola Bay, 38 new 1.5-acre water column parcels have just been established as the latest Aquaculture Use Zone. All the new leaseholders intend on using suspended or floating off-bottom gear, and plan on cultivating oysters. With the continued expansion of oyster farming throughout the state, the addition of these new leases dramatically increases oyster cultivation in this historic and nationally renowned bay. For more information on the new AUZ or submerged land leasing program, contact the Division at (850) 617-7600.

