

# FLORIDA AQUACULTURE

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## FDA TO STUDY GULF OYSTER POST HARVEST PROCESSING

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced on November 13th they will conduct an independent study to assess how post-harvest processing or other equivalent controls for the naturally occurring bacteria *Vibrio vulnificus* can be feasibly implemented in the Gulf Coast during the summer months.

Oyster post harvest processing methods include quick freezing, low temperature heat, high hydro-

static pressure, or low-dose gamma radiation.

FDA also commented they will continue to reach out to state authorities and the Gulf Coast industry to discuss their concerns about the agency's policy and measures the industry is pursuing to make oysters safer.

The Division of Aquaculture and the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC) are continuing to improve and revise a long-term illness reduction plan.

Under the illness reduction plan significant changes have been made in recent years to educate at-risk consumers about the risks of consuming raw oysters. Additional changes are required to be in-place by May 2010.

Commissioner Charles H. Bronson announced on November 5th that a series of workshops have been scheduled to discuss the requirements of the National Shellfish Sanitation Program

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## WINTER WEATHER: COOL AND WET

El Niño refers to a periodic episode (every 2-7 years) of warming in the tropical Pacific Ocean along the equator from the coast of South America to the central Pacific. El Niño/La Niña modeling centers around the world agree that Pacific waters will continue to warm and result in a weak to moderate El Niño over the next 3-6 months. Heat and humidity from El Niño changes global atmospheric circulation and disrupts weather and climate patterns around the world.

Starting in November, El Niño will affect the jet stream pattern in a manner that will lead to frequent winter storms and frontal systems, cooler temperatures, cloudier skies, and above average rainfall. In December through March El Niño typically leads to rainfall 40% to 50% greater than normal over the Florida peninsula. These winter impacts of El Niño are generally stronger than any other time of year and consistent over past El Niño years; therefore the winter forecast can be viewed as reliable. During an El Niño influenced winter Florida can expect the following:

Region	Oct-Dec	Jan- Mar	Apr-Jun
Peninsular Florida	Wet & cool	Very wet & cool	Slightly dry
Western Panhandle	No impact	Wet	Slightly dry

To keep track of Florida's agricultural weather and weather related topics visit AgroClimate at <http://agroclimate.org/>.

### THE BARTOW OFFICE IS MOVING

On December 7th, the Bartow Office (Portia Sapp and Danny Merryman) will be moved to the Division of Fruit and Vegetables offices in Winter Haven. The new address and telephone number is:

Nora Mayo Hall  
500 3<sup>rd</sup> St NW, Room # 113  
Winter Haven, FL 33881-3403  
Phone: 863-297-3985  
Fax: 863-297-3965

## USDA OFFERS DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Contact local  
USDA, Farm  
Service Agency  
offices for  
application  
dates and fee  
information.

Aquaculturists interested in these programs must contact their local U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency office for application dates and fee information.

### **Noninsured Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)**

Provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occurs due to natural disasters.

An eligible natural disaster is any of the following:

- damaging weather, such as drought, freeze, hail, excessive moisture, excessive wind or hurricanes;
- an adverse natural occurrence, such as earthquake or flood; or
- a condition related to damaging weather or an

adverse natural occurrence, such as excessive heat, disease or insect infestation.

The natural disaster must occur before or during harvest and must directly affect the eligible crop.

### **Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP)**

Provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather or other conditions. ELAP is being implemented to fill in the gap and provide assistance under other conditions determined to be appropriate.

Producers must have suffered losses that occurred on or after Jan. 1, 2008, and before

Oct. 1, 2011. There is a total \$100,000 limitation per crop year that applies to ELAP payments. For the 2008 crop year, the \$100,000 limitation is per "person" as defined and determined under payment limitation rules in effect for 2008. For crop years 2009 through 2011, the \$100,000 limitation applies to payments received, both directly and indirectly, by a person or legal entity. Furthermore, individuals or entities are ineligible for payment under ELAP for 2008 if their average Adjusted Gross Income for 2005, 2006 and 2007 exceeds \$2.5 million. For 2009 through 2011, an average adjusted gross nonfarm income limitation of \$500,000 applies.

Visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov> for more information.

## FDA PROHIBITS CATTLE PRODUCTS IN ANIMAL FEEDS

Effective October 26, 2009, a new U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rule prohibits the use of certain cattle origin materials in the food, feed, or feed ingredient for all animals to reduce the risk of the spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in the United States. BSE belongs to a family of diseases that affect the central nervous system. These diseases include scrapie in sheep and goats, chronic wasting disease of deer and elk, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans.

The agent that transmits BSE is thought to be the abnormal form of a prion protein in an animal's brain tissue. The prion is not contagious and does not invoke an immune response or inflammatory reaction in host animals. It is resistant to heat and normal sterilization processes.

Cattle materials prohibited in animal food or feeds include the following: 1) The entire carcass of BSE-positive cattle; 2) the brains and spinal cords of cattle 30 months of age or older; 3) the entire carcass of cattle not inspected and

passed for human consumption that are 30 months of age or older from which brains and spinal cords were not effectively removed or otherwise effectively excluded from animal feed; and 4) mechanically separated beef and certain tallow that is derived from prohibited materials.

For a copy of FDA's final rule contact Paul Zajicek, 850-488-4033 or [zajicep@doacs.state.fl.us](mailto:zajicep@doacs.state.fl.us). For more information about BSE visit <http://www.FDA.gov> and type "BSE" into their search engine.

## VHS RECOMMENDATIONS DURING WINTER MONTHS

Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) is a severe disease of freshwater and marine fish. It has caused rapid die-offs in wild populations in the Great Lakes. Affected fish may show internal and external bleeding, darkening, abdominal distension, bulging eyes, and corkscrew swimming.

Florida fish farms, especially in the northern counties, should exercise caution if they buy live game or bait fish from Great Lake region during the winter. This area includes: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New

York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Ontario, and Quebec.

Recent research from the University of Arkansas—Pine Bluff indicates the VHS virus can survive and cause disease if water temperatures are below 18° C (64.4° F). These water temperatures can occur in north Florida and other areas of the state during the winter.

Florida fish that are susceptible include the black crappie, bluegill, brown bullhead, channel catfish, gizzard shad,

largemouth bass, white bass, rock bass, and yellow perch.

As protective measures farmers purchasing VHS susceptible live fish from the Great Lake region should: 1) request a health inspection from the state's competent authority stating the fish have been tested and are free of VHS prior to shipment, and 2) stay alert for more VHS information by visiting <http://www.focusonfishhealth.org/> or contacting your aquatic animal health professional.



## NEWSLETTER SURVEY RESULTS

A postage-paid post card reader survey was included with the June issue of *Florida Aquaculture*. Of the 1,305 newsletters mailed with cards, we received 178 cards (13.6%). Of the 178 returned cards, 173 were completed (5 cards were blank). Of the completed cards, 170 respondents reported that they read the newsletter and 164 (95%) considered it to be helpful. Respondents rated the newsletter with a perfect average score, 5.00, on a scale of from 1 (valuable) to 10 (worthless).

We created the survey to determine if distribution could be accomplished electronically. Of the 173 responses, slightly less than 5% reported they did not have a computer. When asked if a newsletter was sent electronically, 166 respondents an-

swered this question and 92 (53%) of them said they would read it.

We also investigated whether social networking sites or web-based services (e.g., Facebook, MySpace or Twitter) would be options to deliver information. When asked if readers used these services, 130 (75%) reported they did not. Of those respondents that reported they did use social networking services, 47% were opposed to receiving newsletter-like info via social networking sites or services.

We also received a wide variety of reader comments. They requested articles focused upon the different segments of Florida aquaculture, aquaculture research results, regulatory notices and updates, farm successes, equip-

ment or services advertisements, weather predictions, and information describing how to survive in tough economic times.

We queried readers how often they visited the Division's website, [www.FloridaAquaculture.com](http://www.FloridaAquaculture.com). Most readers responded (45%) that they "never" or "rarely" visit the web site. However, 22% visit the website each month.

Thank you for sending in your responses. We will continue to produce a print newsletter and make changes to improve content.

Please note the Division of Marketing offers an on-line means to advertise equipment and products. Visit the *Florida Market Bulletin* at <http://www.florida-agriculture.com/fmb/> to post or read classified ads.

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CHARLES H. BRONSON  
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R. Sherman Wilhelm, Director



#### MISSION

Regulating and supporting aquaculture production and growth for economic development while protecting the environment.

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ENFORCEMENT  
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DACS-P-00082

## FDA ANNOUNCEMENT (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

(NSSP) involving oysters and *Vibrio vulnificus* bacteria.

Requirements of the NSSP will be discussed with affected oyster industry members throughout the state, and input received from harvesters, processors and members of the general public who are interested in the issue will be used to shape the potential rule amendments which are likely to significantly impact commercial harvesting and processing of oysters.

NSSP requirements call for significant decrease in time allowed for commercial oyster harvest and for significantly quicker cool down of oysters at the oyster processor during the months of May through October.

"I would encourage oyster harvesters and processors to attend these important workshops," Bronson said. "Any proposed rule amendments will apply to commercial oyster harvesting and processing in Florida."

Bronson said the workshops will be held from November 30th through December 10th at locations ranging from Ponte Vedra Beach to Milton.

Meeting times, dates and locations for these workshops are available from the Division of Aquaculture at <http://www.floridaaquaculture.com/notices.htm>.

To learn more about the ISSC, visit <http://www.floridaaquaculture.com/publications/ISSC%20Technical%20Bulletin.pdf> for a publication that describes this organization or visit the ISSC website: <http://www.issc.org/>.

For information about post harvest processing, HACCP, and seafood processing or regulations in general, contact Dr. Steve Otwell, 352-392-4221 or 392-1991 or [otwell@ufl.edu](mailto:otwell@ufl.edu).

For information about Florida's shellfish processing regulations, HACCP, post harvest processing, or public workshop schedule call Dr. David Heil or Alan Peirce at 850-488-5471.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT  
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