



California Restricts Summer Harvested Oysters

The State of California imposed an emergency regulation on May 1st limiting importation of summer harvested Gulf of Mexico oysters. Only those oysters subjected to post harvest treatments that reduce *Vibrio vulnificus* to non-detectable levels will be allowed during April through October. California is in the process of making this rule permanent.

Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi separately challenged California's rule, arguing its implementation violates the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference policies and purpose. The Conference was created to resolve interstate differences and develop uniform shellfish handling practices for the United States. The Conference has supported considerable regional and national educational efforts to inform at-risk consumers that cooked oysters are a safe alternative to fresh product.



The California rule became the primary issue for Florida during the 2003 Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference. The Conference acted by notifying California that it has violated the spirit and intent of the Conference process, the Conference is dissatisfied with their actions, and that their department of health representatives are to appear at the first Executive Board meeting in 2004. A motion to censure California and remove their voting rights was narrowly defeated (Florida voted in favor).

California responded to Louisiana's challenge to the rule by defending their decision. The state attorney generals for Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas are discussing possible legal action against the State of California. For additional information, contact David Heil at 850-487-5471 or Dan Leonard, ISSC Region 4 Representative, 941-473-3292 or clams@sunline.net.

Inside this issue:

Aquaculture BMP Signs Installed	2
Successful Gator Egg Collection	2
USDA Vet Joins Ruskin Staff	3
California Bans Transgenics	3
BMP Notes	3
Fishing for Success	4



CHARLES H. BRONSON
Commissioner of Agriculture

Aquaculture BMP Signs Installed at Cedar Key and Ruskin



Aquaculture Best Management Practices educational signs have been installed at the UF-Shellfish Aquaculture Research and Education Center (Cedar Key) and the UF-Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory (Ruskin).

The signs explain Best Management Practices used at each facility as working examples of environmental management appropriate for the size and scope of individual commercial aquaculture operations.

Introductory tours for on-site discussions and Q&A regarding implementing Best Management Practices will be held for farmers and interested parties. Please mark your calendar to visit with Division staff and UF aquaculture extension specialists.

Ruskin: October 2nd from 1:00 to 3:00 PM.

Cedar Key: October 8th from 1:00 to 3:00 PM.



As soon as scheduling allows, signs will be installed at the UF-Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences in Gainesville and the UF/IFAS Indian River Research and Education Center Shrimp Demonstration Project in Ft. Pierce.

The signs were created through a grant provided under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act as administered by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

For additional information about the Aquaculture Best Management Program contact Kal Knickerbocker and Neil Aymond at 850-488-4033 or Mike Miltner, Wesrick Stephen and Chris Brooks at 863-519-8459. For information and directions to the University of Florida facilities contact Leslie Sturmer at the Shellfish Aquaculture Research and Education Center (352-543-5057) or Carlos Martinez at the Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory (813-671-5230 ext 109).



2003 Alligator Egg Collection Is a Success



Wet weather agrees with female alligators according to farmers participating in the collection of wild alligator eggs from public lands. Over 1,061 nests yielded 26,647 eggs that were collected

mid-summer for grow out. The number of eggs retained for farming was the highest in recent years.

Each year alligator farmers fund inventory and collection of wild alligator nests from public lands as component of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission alligator management program. Commission biologists monitor the program and all collection costs are borne by the farmers.

Going into the collection, farmer participants were concerned with rain and high water levels. However, egg quality and the number of fertile eggs collected were the best observed in the last ten years. Total egg collection



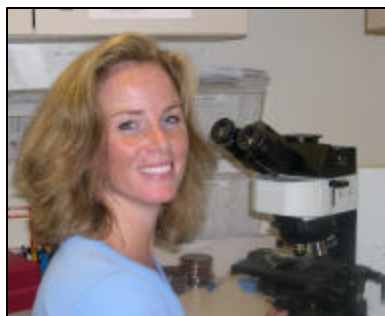
might have been the best ever if the US Corp of Engineers had lowered water levels as summer rains filled Lake Okeechobee. Nests laid early in the summer were lost to the rising water.

Unfortunately, consumer demand and farm-gate prices for alligator leather and meat has been the lowest ever experienced by the industry. A soft tourist and world economy and the merger of high-end fashion houses have resulted in full freezers and infrequent raw leather orders.

VMO Joins UF-Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory

The United States Department of Agriculture-Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services is pleased to announce the arrival of Dr. Kathleen Hartman as the new Aquaculture Epidemiologist, Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO). Dr. Hartman is stationed in Ruskin at the University of Florida-Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory.

Kathleen earned her masters degree in fish nutrition from the University of Maryland, College Park, studying the effects of phytase additions to striped bass diets formulated primarily from plant protein



sources. She received her veterinary degree and Ph.D. from the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VMRCVM, VPI&SU), Blacksburg,

VA. Her doctoral research investigated the pharmacological behavior of oxytetracycline in summer flounder, *Paralichthys dentatus*, maintained at different salinities and states of health. She has several years of experience as lead clinician at the Aquatic Medicine Laboratory at VMRCVM, VPI&SU of diseases affecting both freshwater and marine food fish species, such as hybrid striped bass, yellow perch, tilapia, channel catfish, summer and southern flounder, cobia and black sea bass. Kathleen has also lectured and provided wet-labs at numerous national and international aquaculture and aquatic animal health conferences.

As an aquaculture epidemiologist, Dr. Hartman will work closely with fish producers, faculty at the University of Florida, area veterinarians, statisticians and economists to assist in diagnosis and control exotic and domestic diseases of ornamental fish stocks and other aquatic animals. She will also endorse health certificates for international shipments of aquatic animals. Kathleen looks forward to meeting and working with all those involved in the Florida aquaculture industry. To contact Dr. Hartman please call her at (813) 671-5230 or via email at kathleen.h.hartman@aphis.usda.gov.

California Effectively Bans Transgenic Aquatics

The California Department of Fish and Game has implemented regulations that require a permit to import, possess, transport or culture live, transgenic aquatic species.

Transgenic species are those organisms that include genes from dissimilar species.



Permitting will be difficult and involve strict requirements to prevent escape or theft. Violation may invoke a civil penalty of up to \$10,000, additional investigation and attorney fees, and potentially other severe criminal penalties.

For additional information, contact Edmund Pert, Chief, Fisheries Program Branch, California Department of Fish and Game, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, California 95814 or telephone 916-445-3616.

Photo courtesy of the National University of Singapore.



BMP Notes

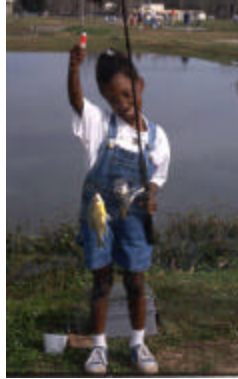
National security concerns and new requirements for country-of-origin identification will be triggering increased inspections of your live shipments. You can minimize delays and potential problems by properly identifying your products.

In accordance with Florida law and the Aquaculture BMPs, "Aquaculture products shall be identified by an aquaculture certificate of registration number from harvest to point of sale. Any person who possesses aquaculture products must show, by appropriate receipt, bill of sale, bill of lading, or other such manifest where the product originated." The aquaculture certificate of registration number (AQ#) must be included on receipts, bill of sales, bill of ladings, other such manifests, or stamped or attached to the shipping containers.

A little extra effort to properly identify your products will prevent delays and additional inspections – reducing product losses or even confiscation. For additional information please contact the Division of Aquaculture at 850-488-4033.

Get Hooked on *Fishing for Success*

A fishery and aquatic environmental education program started at the University of Florida in 1998 is catching on with over 13,000 participants during 2002. Through a combination of on-site and off-site tours, demonstrations, hands-on activities, and community fishing events, the program provides education, recreation, and rehabilitation therapy.



The program has been recognized with the prestigious 2002 USDA Award for Superior Service and the 2001 Conservation Educator of the Year award from the Florida Wildlife Federation.

Fishing for Success hosts monthly events that provide families the opportunity to fish together in a safe and fun setting at the six "catching ponds" at the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences in Gainesville. Program volunteers completed 33 off-site events that included career-day seminars and educational presentations on the biology and ecology of fish and aquatic invertebrates found in Florida lakes and ponds, hands-on environmental education and ecology presentations and fishing days around the state.



Fishing for Success is seeking financial help for this year. Please contact Dr. Dan Canfield at 352-392-9671 ext. 246 to make tax deductible contributions. Visit <http://fishweb.ifas.ufl.edu/FishSuccess/> for program information.

Division of Aquaculture

The Division of Aquaculture's primary responsibilities include certifying all legitimate aquaculturists through an annual registration, implementing a program of Aquaculture Best Management Practices to meet the State of Florida's environmental goals, managing 1.4 million acres of coastal waters for the harvest or culture of wholesome shellfish, implementing the National Shellfish Sanitation Program through periodic inspection of shellfish processing plants and product, and issuing submerged sovereign land leases for aquacultural purposes.

The aquaculture and shellfish industry can acquire assistance through a variety of means. The Division can be contacted by telephone, 850-488-4033 and 488-5471, or fax 850-410-0893. Tallahassee and the seven state offices are open five days a week from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Offices are located in Apalachicola, Bartow, Cedar Key, Murdock, Orlando, Palm Bay and Panama City. Internet users can visit the Division's web site at <http://www.FloridaAquaculture.com> for industry and program information.

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