

EARLY 2005 HURRICANE FORECAST RELEASED



Doctors William Gray and Philip Klotzbach, Department of Atmospheric Science, Colorado State University, predict a slightly above-average hurricane season for the Atlantic basin. Also, an above-average probability of U.S. major hurricane landfall is anticipated. They do not expect anything close to the 2004 U.S. hurricane landfall activity.

They estimate that 2005 will have about 6 hurricanes (average is 5.9), 11 named storms (average is 9.6), 55 named storm days (average is 49), 25 hurricane days (average is 24.5), 3 intense (category 3-4-5) hurricanes (average is 2.3), and 6 intense hurricane days (average is 5.0).

The probability of U.S. major hurricane landfall is estimated to be 30 percent above the long-period average.

Gray and Klotzbach predict probabilities for at least one major (Category 3-4-5) hurricane landfall on each of the following coastal areas:

1) Entire U.S. coastline - 69% (average for last

century was 52%).

- 2) U.S. East Coast Including Peninsula Florida - 49% (average for last century was 31%).
- 3) Gulf Coast from the Florida Panhandle westward to Brownsville is 39% (average for last century was 30%).
- 4) Above-average major hurricane landfall risk in the Caribbean.

The complete forecast is available on the web at: <http://hurricane.atmos.colostate.edu/forecasts/2004/dec2004/>.

Special points of interest

- Hurricane experts predict above average Florida landfalls in 2005.
- USFWS accepts AQ# for live rock exports.
- BMP record keeping will help with COOL labeling.
- Division seeks comment on Organic Standards.

SWFWMD AMENDS WATER USE PERMIT TRANSFER

BY CARA MARTIN, FLORIDA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) has amended their *Rule 40D-2.351 Transfer of Permits*.

In the past, if a water use permit holder sold land,

they had 30 days after close of sale to transfer the water use permit to the new landowner. As of February 1, 2005, the amended rule language states that if a person wishes to continue an

existing, permitted water use and who have acquired ownership or legal control of permitted water withdrawal facilities or the land on which the facilities are located, they

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USFWS RECOGNIZES LIVE ROCK AQ#

In January 2004 a live rock producer requested assistance from the Division of Aquaculture to resolve a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) permitting problem. USFWS implements international trade regulations for endangered or threatened species as promulgated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The producer could not export his product because of the lengthy period of time needed to acquire a CITES export permit to clear USFWS inspectors at Miami International. USFWS was contacted and provided information that argued: 1) the substrate material the

live rock producer was using, fossilized coral mined as road bed materials, was being inappropriately identified as a species subject to the CITES coral trade regulations, and 2) the State of Florida was enforcing a regulatory program to protect wild coral and manage the production and marketing of live rock through the Aquaculture Certificate of Registration, Best Management Practices, and sovereign submerged lands lease provisions for live rock producers.



As a result, the Service produced a letter advising the Division that live rock exports accompanied by a copy of the Certificate and a statement that the live rock in the shipment was produced under the provisions of the Certificate could be exported without a CITES permit.

For copies of the USFWS letter or additional information, contact Paul Zajicek at 850-488-4033 or zajicep@doacs.state.fl.us.

NAAHP WORKSHOP TRIGGERS QUESTIONS

Representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Marine Fisheries Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service met with Florida tropical fish farmers, veterinarians, fish pathologists, ornamental fish distributors, and an ornamental fish producer



from North Carolina to learn what they were interested in including in a National Aquatic Animal Health Plan (NAAHP).

The NAAHP objectives include: efficient, safe, and effective national and international commerce of aquatic animals; protec-

tion of cultured and wild aquatic animals from foreign pests and diseases; the U.S. government to meet its legal trade obligations; and, the availability of diagnostic and certification services for public, private, and tribal entities.

Workshop attendees expressed skepticism and concern about

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SWFWMD PERMIT CHANGES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

must apply to transfer the permit to themselves within 45 days of acquiring ownership or legal control of the water withdrawal facilities or the land.

The new landowner shall request such transfer using a "Notification and Request for Transfer of a Water Use Permit", Form No. 04.10 R-025 (8/02). The District will transfer

the permit provided all aspects of the permit, except for ownership, remain the same.

Persons who apply to transfer a permit and who propose to change the source, use, or withdrawal quantities from the specified on the existing permit must also submit an application to modify the permit with the application to transfer the per-

mit. If the permit is not transferred within the 45 day time period the permit will become null and void and subject to cancellation.

For additional information, please visit the District's web site at: <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/>.

COOL IS ON ITS WAY

The new Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) regulations promulgated by USDA for food go into effect on April 4, 2005.

The purpose of the regulations is to provide consumers with greater information about the source of the seafood they may buy. Retailers are to label fish and shellfish as either wild or farmed, and the location of harvesting and processing.

Definitions are important to this law. Fish is finfish sold as food. Shellfish covers items like shrimp, clams, oysters, mussels, crawfish and scallops. A retailer is a person licensed under the Perishable Agricultural Commodity Act (PACA). PACA does not license food service, meat markets or fish markets.

Any fish harvested before December 6, 2004 is exempt. Also, fish or shellfish used in processed food as an ingredient do not have to have the label affixed to the processed food. Processed food is defined as a seafood product that has changed in character through specific processing or has combined with another covered commodity, such as canned, bottled, stews, smoked or breaded products. Farmed is defined as being hatched, raised, harvested and processed in a particular country. Raised means growing in a controlled environment or in controlled waters or beds. Controlled means some human intervention to enhance production.

In essence, farmers will have to maintain records, for retail labeling purposes, to demonstrate that their fish or

shellfish were farmed. This means that the records kept pursuant to the BMPs and/or your sovereignty submerged land lease can be used to prove that the label you put on your boxes or bags is correct.

Florida aquaculturist selling live, iced, or frozen products, with no foreign products added, should use a label that reads: "Hatched, Raised, Harvested, and Processed in U.S."

USDA will allow a grace period for purposes of incorporating the new regulations until October 4, 2005. After that date, enforcement will begin with fines up to \$10,000 per violation at the retail level. For a copy of the new regulation, go to <http://www.ams.usda.gov/cool/>.

ORGANIC AQUACULTURE: WE NEED YOUR INPUT

The National Organic Aquaculture Work Group met recently to discuss progress to date on the creation of standards to forward to the USDA National Organic Program and then to the National Organic Standards Board.

There was a great deal of discussion by the Work Group on what has and has not been done. The Work Group is considering resubmitting a scope of work proposal that was previously denied, partially due to the fact that the National Organic Standards Board did not understand that it was just a guide

on how to proceed with standards for aquaculture.

National standards are needed to prevent imports from coming into the U.S. under an foreign organic label not following the same standards as U.S. farmers. Once U.S. standards are established, anything sold as organic will have to meet the same standard.

Industry segments around the country are being heard and now is the time to enter the discussion. Specifically for shellfish farmers, a lot of focus is on production techniques and methods.

As the leader in U.S. hard clam production, Florida producers need to be heard.

THE BIG QUESTION IS: DO YOU AS A FLORIDA AQUACULTURIST WANT ORGANIC STANDARDS FOR YOUR COMMODITY? Please email or call Sherman Wilhelm with your comments at 850-488-4033 or wilhels@doacs.state.fl.us.

Let the Division know so we can respond accurately when asked.

NAAHP (CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO)

expanding government programs that might inhibit the shipment of live fish nationally or internationally.

Suggestions were provided to: recognize the unique and varied segments of U.S. aquaculture that exist; create a mechanism for producer input; adopt a risk analysis process to identifying problematical

diseases; adopt a matrix of information that relates disease to species, production systems, markets and potential impacts; improve U.S. representation at the OIE; and increased funding within the agencies to hire aquaculture knowledgeable veterinarians, increase diagnostic laboratory capabilities, and improve

disease diagnosis.

Producers can review and comment on NAAHP contents by visiting http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/aqua/naah_plan.html.

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*Benefiting commercial aquaculture,
Conserving natural resources*



The Division of Aquaculture's responsibilities include certifying commercial aquaculturists through an annual registration, implementing on-farm 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 and nutritious shellfish, implementing the National Shellfish Sanitation Program through shellfish plant and product inspections, and managing submerged sovereign land leases for aquacultural purposes.

*Visit our web site,
www.FloridaAquaculture.com,
for aquaculture, shellfish, and Division program information*

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