

FLORIDA AQUACULTURE

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AQUACULTURE REVIEW COUNCIL RECOMMENDS PROJECTS

Each year the Aquaculture Review Council (ARC), an advisory group to the Commissioner of Agriculture, recommends aquaculture related research and development projects for state funding.

Following their meeting in late May, the ARC recommended and ranked six projects for the state fiscal year of 2006-07. The projects and sponsors are: *Exploring Current and Potential Aquaculture Opportunities in Florida* by the Florida Aquaculture Association, *Design and Evaluation of Marine Fish and Live Feeds Recirculating Systems for Inland Aquaculture* by Mote Marine Laboratory, *Development of Small Scale Aquaculture Farms in North Florida* by Florida A&M

University, *Establishing a Center for Live Feeds Mass Production and Research to Expand Florida's Aquaculture Industry* by Florida State University, *AquariumMania—An Exhibit on Aquaculture as Hobby and Career* by The Florida Aquarium, and *An Instruction Video Guide to Hurricane Preparedness for Florida Aquaculture Producers* by Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution.

The next step is for the Commissioner to add the projects to the Department's legislative budget request.

Three projects survived the state budgeting process and were funded for

fiscal year 2005-06 which began July 1. Those projects are: *The Cause, Control and Prevention of Brown Spot and Pix Hide Scars in Alligator Skins* by the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, *Developing Marine Fish Hatchery and Nursery Culture to Expand Florida's Aquaculture Industry – Year 3* by Mote Marine Laboratory, and *Improving Sturgeon Production System Design: Integrated Research, Production and Education* by Wildwood Middle School.

For additional information, contact Karen Metcalf at 850-488-4033 or metcalk@doacs.state.fl.us.

Special points of interest

- Non-native species educational unit available
- Marine net pen BMP working group formed
- Channeled apple snail enforcement in the works
- Apalachicola oyster harvesting season changing

AG SALES TAX EXEMPTION SIGNED

Governor Bush signed HB 643 exempting powered equipment used on the farm to produce crops. The exemption became effective on July 1.

To qualify for this exemption, producers must provide a

signed exemption certificate to the seller. The Department of Revenue has an administrative rule that defines the equipment and uses that are exempt and suggested language for an exemption certificate. Visit

<http://taxlaw.state.fl.us> and type the rule number, 12A-1087, into the search box to locate the rule and exemption certificate. For additional information contact Department of Revenue representative Richard Parsons at 850-922-4838.

FLORIDA'S MOST WANTED

The Division has developed and distributed an educational unit on *Florida Agriculture and Non-native Species*. Florida Ag in the Classroom, Inc. provided funding for the project that introduces third through fifth grades to the value of non-native species in our lives and the risks associated with invasive species.

The unit includes an introductory presentation on the topic in Power

Point format and a script that teachers can modify to meet their needs.

Ten lessons are part of the unit and cover concepts in many disciplines with ideas for evaluating students and extending topics. Sunshine State Standards for each lesson are also included.



Cornerstone Learning Community's fourth grade class in Tallahassee generously offered to test the unit

during the last school year. The students were enthusiastic about the lessons that included hands-on activities and group brainstorming sessions. Copies of the unit have been mailed to every public school in the state and were distributed to agriculture educators at a recent conference. A copy of the unit and presentation can be found at <http://www.FloridaAquaculture.com> under publications. For more information, contact Karen Metcalf at metcalk@doacs.state.fl.us or 850-488-4033.

NATIONAL OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE ACT INTRODUCED

On June 7, 2005, the Bush Administration submitted to Congress for consideration and action The National Offshore Aquaculture Act of 2005. The bill would grant the Secretary of Commerce new authority to issue permits for offshore aquaculture in federal ocean waters, also known as the United States Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), while providing environmental and other safeguards to protect wild stocks, marine ecosys-



tems, and other users. The Act, which does not supersede existing authorities, specifically provides for coordination and consultation with other federal agencies, Fishery Management Councils, and coastal states.

The next day Senators Ted Stevens (Alaska) and Daniel Inouye (Hawaii) introduced the bill and offered amendments along with Senator Olympia Snowe (Maine). The amendments concern: 1) striking language that

allowed foreign ownership, and a vessel documentation or fishery endorsement exemption, and 2) creating the ability for a state to opt out and extending a state's seaward portion of the EEZ to the edge of the EEZ.

To view the bill and how it is evolving, visit <http://thomas.loc.gov> and type "S. 1195" in the search box. For information about offshore aquaculture visit a NOAA website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/mediacenter/aquaculture/>.

MARINE NET PEN WORKING GROUP FORMED

The Division of Aquaculture has invited industry, agency, university, and environmental representatives to participate in a Marine Net Pen Best Management Practice (BMP) Working Group. Over a three month period, that began in June, the Working Group will be reviewing and revising a draft marine net pen BMP.

Members include: Dr. Dan Benetti, University of Miami; Dr. Frank

Chapman, University of Florida; Marianne Cufone, environmental attorney; Laura Geselbracht, The Nature Conservancy; Lisa Gregg, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; Dr. Markus Huettal, Florida State University; Bob Jones, Southeastern Fisheries Association; Dan Roberts, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; Jim Stoutamire, Department of Environmental Protection; and Marty Tanner, Florida Aquaculture Association.

The BMP will concern net pens located in state waters and potential operational and management issues that may impact marine resources: site selection, feed management, nutrients, escape, solid waste, and general facility management.

For additional information, contact Sherman Wilhelm at 850-488-4033 or wihels@doacs.state.fl.us.

USDA-APHIS PLANNING INCREASED CHANNELED APPLE SNAIL ENFORCEMENT

Following a March 2005 apple snail workshop held in Houston Texas, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), announced their intention to consistently and routinely enforce an existing requirement for the movement of aquatic snails in international and interstate commerce.

The existing regulations under 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 330 already prohibit or restrict the importation or interstate movement of plant pests to prevent their dissemination in the U.S. and aquatic snails can be defined as plant pests. Within the existing regulation are permit requirements for anyone importing plant pests or moving them interstate, and these permit are administered and issued by APHIS.

Aquatic snails have often been imported with aquarium supplies or as "hitchhikers" with imported aquatic plants, many are often sold as pets within the U.S., and are sold in in-



Channeled apple snail collected in Tallahassee.

terstate commerce. Most species of the genus *Pomacea* pose a threat to US agricultural crops, especially rice. The channeled apple snail, *P.*

canaliculata, has caused rice crop losses in the Philippines and the Dominican Republic.

Species within *Pomacea* are often difficult to identify, and a variety of species may be sold in the aquarium trade. Considering the threat to US agriculture, and how diffi-

cult it is to locate and identify these snails, APHIS intends to more consistently and routinely enforce the requirements in 7 CFR part 330. This action is necessary to prevent introduction of snails to new locations or increasing the size of existing populations of destructive aquatic snails.

The channeled apple snail is established in Florida with recent finds reported near Brooksville and Florida City. There are no prohibitions against possession or sale in the

state but several states have banned the species. Shipping the channeled apple snail from Florida to a state where they are prohibited is a violation of the Lacey Act and can incur severe penalties.

The Division produced an apple snail technical bulletin in 2002 to assist growers with snail identification. The bulletin is available on the web at <http://www.floridaaquaculture.com/publications/Apple%20Snails.pdf> or a copies can be requested from the people listed below.



Yellow color phase of the channeled apple snail

Florida farms that produce freshwater snails and are not sure of their identification can contact Division of Aquaculture personnel in Tallahassee (Paul Zajicek: 850-488-4033) or Bartow (Mike Miltner: 863-519-8459) or Carlos Martinez at the University of Florida, Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory (813-671-5230 extension 109).

NORTH CAROLINA APPROVED TO CULTURE ATLANTIC STURGEON

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission approved an addendum to their Atlantic Sturgeon Interstate Fishery Management Plan to allow a commercial aquaculture operation in North Carolina. The Division of Aquaculture acquired a similar addendum for Florida farms in 2001.

The Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coast states in 1942 in recognition that fish do not adhere to political boundaries. The Commission serves as a deliberative body, coordinating the conservation and management of the states shared near shore fishery resources – marine, shell, and anadromous – for sustainable use.

The North Carolina exemption will allow fingerling importation from Canada, and possession, production, and sale of cultured fish. It is anticipated that the sale of cultured Atlantic sturgeon caviar and meat would not occur for at least three years. For additional information, visit the Commission's website at <http://www.asfmc.org>.

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*Benefiting commercial aquaculture,
Conserving natural resources*



Special Notice

To be consistent with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission vote to change the oyster harvesting seasons for the Apalachicola Bay System, the Division of Aquaculture, Shellfish Environmental Assessment Section, has altered the management plans for Apalachicola Bay and Indian Lagoon to reflect the new seasons.

Currently, the dates for winter harvesting are October 1st through June 30th, and the dates for summer harvesting are July 1st through September 30th.

Effective September 1st, 2005, the new winter harvesting dates will be September 1st through May 31st, and the new summer harvesting dates will be June 1st through August 31st.

Due to the timing of the new rule, the summer season for Apalachicola Bay and Indian Lagoon will only be two months (July and August) long this year. No changes to rainfall and river management plans had to be made to initiate the seasonal changes.

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

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