

Florida Aquaculture

Alligator egg collections set new record

Florida alligator farmers assist the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) with wild alligator management by collecting alligator eggs each summer (June–July) for grow-out on the farm.

The FWC establishes nest quotas and collection areas and farmers pay all the costs associated with the collection effort, including a \$5.00 per egg fee paid to the FWC to support

biological research. Thirty farms participated this year and spent an estimated \$445,000 in direct costs and fees.

The 2006 egg collection yielded a record 45,730 eggs over a 21-day collection period. The original record was set in 2004 of 40,936 eggs. The Lake Okeechobee collection yielded over 16,000 eggs which was very produc-

tive. Water Conservation Areas of South Florida yielded less than 500 eggs, a tenth of normal numbers because of drought.

In a change in FWC policy, six areas were opened up to unlimited collection as a result of successful FWC management strategies that have produced alligators of sufficient size and year class to support a no-quota collection.



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2005 Hurricane Aquaculture Block Grant eligible claims

The Aquaculture Block Grant is a reimbursement program. This means that effected farmers must have **paid** for the replacement or repair of crop or physical damages caused by hurricanes to be eligible. **If a farmer has not replaced or repaired hurricane related damages or losses, this program cannot assist the farmer.** Out-of-pocket expenses to replace or repair hurricane damages are eligible items, so long as a farmer has

proper supporting documentation showing that the claimed item(s) has been paid.

The farmer must provide proof of payment. If a farmer replaced seed, fingerlings, or plants that were produced internally from their own operation, but the farmer has no transaction receipts, then these internally replaced items are not eligible. How-

ever, a farmer can claim the costs associated with producing these items by providing paid receipts.

Deadline to submit an application to the Division of Aquaculture office in Tallahassee is October 6, 2006, 5:00 PM EDT. Contact Kal Knickerbocker for information at 850-488-4033. Visit <http://www.FloridaAquaculture.com> for an application.

Florida Right to Farm Act strengthened

In 1961, the Florida Legislature recognized the value of agriculture by passing the Florida Right to Farm Act (Chapter 823.14, Florida Statutes) to prevent the imposition of nuisance law suits.

The Act has been strengthened to prevent local governments from adopting any ordinance, regulation,

rule, or policy to prohibit, restrict, regulate, or otherwise limit the activities of a bona fide farm operation on land classified as agricultural land, where such activities are regulated through implemented best management practices developed by the Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, or water

management districts and adopted under Chapter 120, F.S., as part of a statewide or regional program.

Aquaculture facilities that possess an Aquaculture Certificate of Registration qualify for this protection. Visit <http://www.leg.state.fl.us> for the complete text of the Act.

Florida Oceans Council: One year later

The Florida Oceans and Coastal Resources Council was created by the 2005 Legislature and is comprised of three non-voting members and fifteen voting members appointed by the Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Charles Bronson, Commissioner of Agriculture, appointed Jane Davis, Aquarium Director, The Living Seas at Walt Disney World's Epcot®, as the aquaculture representative.

The Council is charged each year with developing priorities for ocean and coastal research and establishing a statewide ocean research

plan. The group will also coordinate public and private ocean research for more effective coastal management. The Council has produced three separate reports summarizing agency management needs, marine research needs, and a prioritized list of research.

They are currently working with the agencies to incorporate water quality and habitat research projects into their budgets and to develop a cooperative effort to integrate the diverse array of available state and



federal marine data into a coherent information source.

Ms. Davis is chairing an Aquaculture Subcommittee to produce recommendations to expand new marine aquaculture and stock enhancement technologies, including additional species. The report will evaluate the potential for inland, recirculating aquaculture systems to produce marine species and to implement new marine

stock enhancement and aquaculture initiatives. The working group includes aquaculture experts from throughout Florida.

Visit <http://www.floridaoceanscouncil.org> for meeting summaries, reports, and current progress.

UF-Tropical Aquaculture Lab releases new, info-packed web site

The Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory, created in 1996, is a component of the University of Florida's Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences. The Laboratory is located in Ruskin, approximately 20 miles south of Tampa, in the heart of the tropical ornamental aquaculture production.

The mission of the Lab is to enhance the understanding of tropical, ornamental aquaculture through research and education. The Laboratory performs applied research; provides fish disease diagnostic services and extension education programs; and promotes professionalism in Florida's tropical aquaculture industry. All research and extension programs are guided by the Lab's Aquaculture Advisory Committee which is composed of Florida producers.



Research programs support statewide extension programs in ornamental aquaculture as well as the science information needs of industry, agency, and public stakeholders. Research at the Lab is conducted in four core topic areas:

- Ornamental aquaculture production and management.
- Aquatic animal health.
- Ornamental fish reproduction.
- Nonindigenous aquatic species ecology and management.

Extension programs target the needs of Florida's ornamental fish and aquatic plant producers. The faculty and staff also provide support to other aquaculture farmers (e.g., food and game fish) and state agencies.

Extension programs include general production, nutritional management, water quality, pond

and recirculating system management, pest management (including pesticide applicator training and testing), reproduction, fish health and disease management, and non-native species.



Extension information and support is provided through on-site, farm visits; client visits; fish disease diagnostics; workshops, seminars, short courses, and training programs; industry meetings; newsletter articles; and extension publications.

U.S. Department of Agriculture personnel from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service working at the Lab also provide Certificates of Veterinarian Inspection and assistance to prevent and control crop damage by wildlife.

For additional information, visit: <http://tal.ifas.ufl.edu/index.htm>.



Caloosahatchee estuary: problems, progress, and people

Hurricane generated rainfall during 2004 and 2005 triggered large and sustained releases of freshwater from Lake Okeechobee that severely impacted St. Lucie and Lee counties. Estuaries in both areas experienced widespread algae blooms, sea grass die-off, sealife dislocation, and aesthetic impacts.

The Lee County Tourist Development Council, Visitor &



Convention Bureau, has created a fact-filled web site that describes the myriad of problems, impacts, and people that are working to re-direct or store current water flow. The site features project timelines, maps, images, interviews and ecological and economic analyses. There are also a variety of suggestions for Floridians to become informed, get

involved, and make a difference. Visit <http://www.leewaterfacts.com>.

An informed electorate has to be the basis of problem-solving in a democracy.

– Dr. Win Everham
Ecological & Social Science
College of Arts & Science
Florida Gulf Coast University

Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc. celebrates 20 years

Florida agricultural leaders created Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc. in 1986 to educate non-agriculture teachers and students about the importance of agriculture.



Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc.
AGRICULTURE KEEPS FLORIDA GREEN

This effort has grown into a multifaceted, non-profit educational program based in Gainesville that offers teachers in kindergarten through 12th grade curricula, materials, workshops, grant money and other programs to help them incor-

porate agricultural concepts in their language arts, math, science and social studies lessons.

These products and services are available to

Florida teachers free of charge, or for a nominal fee, because of sales of the agriculture specialty license. In the nearly 10 years since the creation of the Ag Tag an estimated 1 million students and more than 15,000 teachers have benefited.

Florida Ag in the Classroom continues to strive to make its programs relevant and interesting to educators and industry volunteers. It has developed pre- and post-tests that are tailored to the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test so teachers can help their students practice for the FCAT.

For more information, contact Lisa Gaskalla by calling 352-846-1391, e-mailing LBGaskalla@ifas.ufl.edu or visiting <http://www.flagintheclassroom.com>.

USDA-APHIS aquatic snail specialists tour Florida farms

Scientists and inspectors from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, toured the UF-Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory, aquatic snail farms, and tropical fish distributors to learn what species of snails are grown and how they are cultured, packaged, and shipped.

Art Rawlings, President, Florida Tropical Fish Farmers Association,



welcomed the USDA representatives and the opportunity to educate them about an important Florida aquacultural product. Mr. Rawlings commented, "The new USDA-APHIS aquatic snail permit caused a significant delay in summer sales and economic losses for Florida farmers. However, USDA has been responsive to our con-

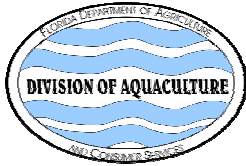


cerns; all of the farms now have their snail permits, and USDA understands our industry much better than

they did several months ago."

Interstate shippers and importers of freshwater and marine snails must acquire a three-year permit from USDA-APHIS to ship into the country or between states. Visit <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/permits/> for information.

Charles H. Bronson
Commissioner of Agriculture



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BIOFLORIDA
Advancing Bioscience in Florida

Internationally renowned speakers, presenters and panelists explore the convergence and synergies between the key life-science sectors (biotech, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, diagnostics and ag-bio), as well as other topics of critical importance to both researchers and industry executives in all aspects of the life science field. The program includes thought-provoking panel discussions, thought-leading key note speakers and plenty of networking opportunities. Session tracks will include bio-science, emerging-business topics, aquaculture technologies, and mature-business topics.

BioFlorida is the statewide industry organization representing life science industry in Florida, one of the fastest growing bio hubs in the world. You won't want to miss this important opportunity to network and learn how the life science industry is evolving here.

For hotel, registration, and complete conference information:
<http://www.bioflorida.com/9/index.html>

Discounted hotel rooms are available on limited basis until Oct 12, 2006. For room reservations please call the Hilton at: (352) 371-3600. Mention Group Code: "bio" for the BioFlorida Conference for a \$129/night room rate.

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