

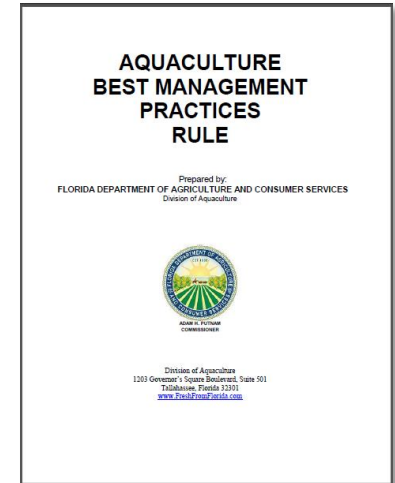
Best Management Practices for Shellfish Aquaculture Gear

Charlie Culpepper, Biological Administrator FDACS - Division of Aquaculture



Florida Aquaculture Policy Act

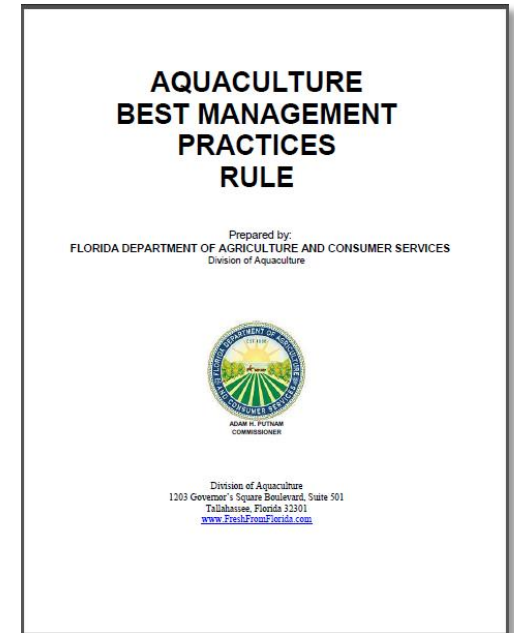
- Recognized the intent of Legislature to **enhance the growth of aquaculture while protecting Florida's environment.**
- Designated FDACS as the regulatory agency of aquaculture in Florida.
- Defined
 - *"Aquaculture is Agriculture"*
 - *"Aquatic Product"*
- Established
 - Aquaculture Certificate of Registration
 - Requires annual renewal.
 - Aquaculture Best Management Practices
 - **Enforced regulations**, not optional.

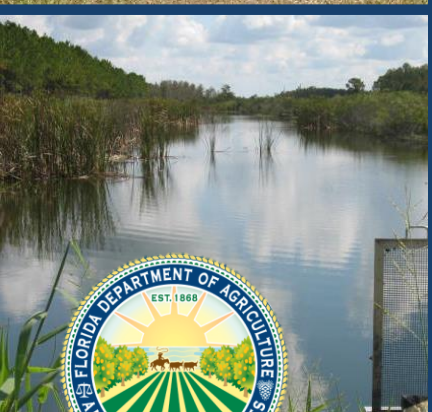


Aquaculture Best Management Practices

- Establishes a **streamlined regulatory process.**
- Incorporated the requirements of and replaced the need for numerous permits:

- General Fish Farm Permit
- Marine Bivalve Permit
- Restricted/conditional species
- Aquaculture Game Fish License
- Management of Storage of Surface Water
- General permits for pond construction
- SAL (for possession of certain species)
- Freshwater and/or Saltwater Products License
- Environmental Resource Permits





Aquaculture Best Management Practices

► Ensure environmental protection

- Periodic, unannounced farm inspections twice per year.
- Inspectors ensure compliance with:
 - Documentation/records/sales receipts
 - Containment
 - Water discharge and effluent treatment
 - **Environmental impacts**
- Do not supersede other applicable local, state and federal regulations, unless explicitly authorized in statute.

For example: Shellfish leases cannot be placed within seagrass habitat due to state regulations which protect seagrasses.



Aquaculture on Sovereignty Submerged Land Leases

- Sovereignty submerged land leases are lands owned by the State of Florida so aquaculturists must obtain permission from the State to culture.
- To date: Florida has **677 active leases covering 1,510 acres.**
- Division oversees the application, execution and compliance of submerged land leases for aquaculture use.
 - **Assess sites** proposed for shellfish farming.
 - **Lease permitting** (SAJ-99) and administration.
 - Establishes and verifies **cultivation requirements.**
 - Enforces **Aquaculture Best Management Practices.**
 - Conducts **inspections and audits** to ensure regulatory compliance.



Shellfish Gear - BMPs

- ▶ Non-natural materials placed in the water or on submerged lands shall be anchored to the bottom.
 - ▶ *This includes any protective netting used to cover clam bags.*
- ▶ All culture materials, cover nets, bags or other designated markers placed on or in the water shall be clean and free of pollutants.
 - ▶ *Including petroleum based products such as creosote, oils and greases or other pollutants.*
 - ▶ *Compounds used as preservatives must be used in accordance with the product label.*



Shellfish Gear - BMPs

- Bags, cover nets, and/or trays used in the culture operation shall be removed from the water during all mechanical cleaning, maintenance and repair operations.
 - *During harvest, culture bags and cover nets shall be rinsed/cleaned over the grow-out area to allow sediments to remain in the lease area.*
 - *Mechanical or hydraulic devices shall not be used below the water for the cleaning of the submerged structures.*
 - *Use hand tools for cleaning shellfish, bags and other structures in the water.*



Shellfish Gear - BMPs

- ▶ The aquaculturist is responsible for the collection and proper disposal of all bags, cover netting or other materials used in the culture of shellfish on submerged lands or when such materials are removed during maintenance or harvesting or become dislodged during storm events.
- ▶ The aquaculturist must remove all works, equipment, structures and improvements from sovereign submerged lands within 60 days following the date of expiration or termination of the lease.



Shellfish Gear - BMPs

- ▶ The leaseholder's identification information shall be attached to all floating or off-bottom culturing structures.
 - ▶ *In the events that floating or off-bottom culturing structures become dislodged from the lease site, **it is the leaseholder's responsibility to retrieve the structures** form the shoreline, seagrass beds, or submerged bottom with minimal damage to the resources affected.*
 - ▶ *The structures shall be removed and properly disposed of or returned to the lease site.*



Questions about the Shellfish Aquaculture Gear BMPs?

