

Shellfish Aquaculture

Division of Aquaculture

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According to the United States Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service Survey, shellfish farming was the second largest valued aquacultured product in Florida in 2012. Shellfish commonly produced in Florida include clams and oysters. Shellfish farming is a multistep process, including: hatcheries, nurseries, grow out on submerged land leases and processing at certified facilities. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) certifies and inspects shellfish aquaculturists and processors.

HATCHERY

Hatcheries are typically upland or land-based facilities. All facilities must be located to minimize environmental impacts and risks to public health and be designed and operated in a manner which minimizes adverse impacts to the receiving waters, adjacent wetlands and uplands. Hatcheries can be operated using a saltwater well or intake pipes from waters of the state. Farmers often produce their own algae to optimize growth. Hatcheries and nurseries must be designed and operated to follow the [Aquaculture Best Management Practices](#).

NURSERY

Nurseries can be upland or on [aquaculture docks](#). These systems typically consist of raceways or upwellers utilizing nearshore water containing natural algae to cost-effectively grow seed.

Indoor recirculating hatchery



Flow-through raceway nursery

SUBMERGED LAND LEASES

Once clams reach 16 millimeters shell length or oysters reach 25 millimeters in shell length, they must be moved to approved waters for grow out. Aquaculture leases are located in Approved and Conditionally Approved waters where shellfish are grown out prior to harvest. The producer's [Aquaculture Certificate of Registration](#) number must accompany shellfish being transported from a hatchery or nursery and to and from approved lease areas.

SALE

Once the shellfish have reached the preferred size for sale, they are harvested from the leases and sold to a Florida certified shellfish processing facility. FDACS also regulates and inspects [shellfish processing facilities](#)

for compliance with shellfish handling, labeling and food safety requirements. **Direct retail sale from the aquaculturist is prohibited.**



Market size hard clams

REGULATORY INFORMATION

For information on leasing sovereignty submerged lands for aquaculture see:

[Aquaculture on Sovereignty Submerged Land](#)

For production and technical assistance contacts see: [Aquaculture Production and Technical Assistance](#) or visit Shellfish.IFAS.UFL.edu.

For import/export requirements see: [Import/Export Requirements for Aquaculture Products](#)

For biosecurity and health requirements see: [Biosecurity at Florida Aquaculture Facilities](#).

For lease marking requirements see: [Navigational Marking of Water Column Aquaculture Leases](#)

For harvesting regulations see: [Aquacultured Shellfish Handling and Harvesting](#)

For the current status of shellfish harvest areas visit: Shellfish.FloridaAquaculture.com/seas/seas_statusmap.htm

