

## GUIDANCE ON ALTERNATIVE MARKETS FOR CULTURED OYSTERS AND CLAMS

UF/IFAS Shellfish Aquaculture Extension Program



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurants and bars across the nation have closed. Since these are the major outlets for Florida's cultured molluscan shellfish, sales have been greatly affected. There are alternative markets (for example, seafood retail, individuals, farmers markets) that can be explored by shellfish wholesalers. Growers may also consider these options by following the guidelines below.

- All farmed molluscan shellfish (oysters, clams) must be received and processed by a certified shellfish wholesale dealer. To find shellfish dealers in Florida, check the Interstate Shellfish Shippers List maintained by the FDA, <https://www.fda.gov/food/federalstate-food-programs/interstate-certified-shellfish-shippers-list>.
- Growers must follow the time/temperature matrix for refrigeration and other handling requirements for harvesting and delivering product to a shellfish wholesaler. The current matrix (dated March 2019) can be found in this fact sheet. Times listed in the matrix table indicate when harvested oysters or clams must be placed in a refrigerated cooler at the processing facility.
- Shellfish must be delivered to a certified facility the same day as harvest within the matrix time limit. This will restrict the time and distance in transporting shellfish from a harvest area to a facility.
- After processing, certified aquaculturists may sell their farmed shellfish directly to seafood markets, restaurants, farmers markets, or individuals, without any further permits or licenses needed.
- It is critical that processor tags must be on the product and invoices/manifests must list the processor and aquaculture certification of registration numbers.
- If a certified farmer is planning to sell farmed shellfish by setting up a temporary tent, catering business, food truck, farmers market booth or similar outlet, additional licenses will be required.
- Molluscan shellfish must be handled properly to slow or stop bacterial growth which will help reduce illnesses. Information on maintaining temperature control post-harvest through the chain of distribution can be found at the East Coast Shellfish Growers Association's website, <https://ecsga.org/vibrio-resources/>.

### For more information, contact:

FDACS Division of Food Safety at (850) 245-5520 or [foodinsp@FDACS.gov](mailto:foodinsp@FDACS.gov) for questions on permits and licenses for retail distribution of raw seafood. Information on permitting may be found at [www.fdacs.gov/Business-Services/Food-Establishments](http://www.fdacs.gov/Business-Services/Food-Establishments).

Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation, Division of Hotel and Restaurants at (850) 487-1395 or [dhf.ifo@myflorida.com](mailto:dhf.ifo@myflorida.com) for questions related to the preparation and sale of cooked seafood. Also visit their website, <http://www.myfloralicense.com/DBPR/hotels-restaurants/licensing/licensing-guides/>.

Charlie Culpepper, FDACS Division of Aquaculture at (850) 617-7616 or [Charlie.Culpepper@FDACS.gov](mailto:Charlie.Culpepper@FDACS.gov) for information or questions about retail sales of farmed shellfish.



Visit <http://shellfish.ifas.ufl.edu> for additional COVID-19 resources.

# Refrigeration Requirements for Shellfish at a Certified Dealer

(Shellfish must be delivered the same day as harvest)

## Oysters

(Times listed in the table are when oysters must be placed in a cooler at a certified shellfish processing facility)

## Clams

Month	Traditional Cooling <sup>1</sup>	Rapid Cooling <sup>2</sup>	On-board Cooling with Ice Slurry <sup>3</sup>	Restricted Use Only <sup>4</sup> (Green Tag)	Delivery to processor (same day of harvest)
November	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	10:00 p.m.
December	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	10:00 p.m.
January	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	10:00 p.m.
February	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	10:00 p.m.
March	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	10:00 p.m.
April	11:00 a.m.	1:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	12 Hours
May	Not permitted	11:00 a.m.	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	12 Hours
June	Not permitted	11:00 a.m.	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	10 Hours
July	Not permitted	11:00 a.m.	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	10 Hours
August	Not permitted	11:00 a.m.	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	10 Hours
September	Not permitted	11:00 a.m.	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	10 Hours
October	11:00 a.m.	1:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	12 Hours

Refer to FWC regulations for current bag limits and resource protection seasonal closures.

**1 - Traditional Cooling** - Oysters must be in the cooler of a certified facility by time specified the day of harvest and at or below 55°F in 8 hours.

**2 - Rapid Cooling** - Oysters must be in the cooler of a certified facility by time specified the day of harvest and at or below 55°F in 2 hours.

**3 - On-board Cooling with Ice Slurry** - Oysters cooled on boat with ice slurry dip within 1 hour of harvest and stored under mechanical refrigeration or in a cooler surrounded by ice. Oysters must be in the cooler of a certified facility.

**4 - Restricted Use (green tag)** - Oysters that do not meet the Rapid Cool or On-Board Cooling requirements must be tagged for shucking only by a certified dealer or for Post Harvest Processing (PHP) only.



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services