

FAA Annual Meeting, October 13-14, 2000, Harbor Branch, Ft. Pierce

FLORIDA Aquaculture ASSOCIATION



Advancing environmentally sound technology and high quality products for today's aquatic farmer.

Newsletter

July, 2000

President's Message

Summertime and the living is easy, but only if you never have an oxygen problem. As farmers we will always face problems, but being farmers we expect them and accept them. And as usual there are a lot of things going on, both good and not so good, that may impact our businesses. The best news is the great Legislative session just completed. The Division of Aquaculture within DACS has been firming up and will not only regulate our industry, but provide a great deal of support to our industry in the years ahead. The Legislature provided some positive changes to laws impacting agriculture. A complete wrap up is included in this newsletter. The Legislature also appropriated an unprecedented amount of funding for aquaculture research and demonstration projects this year. The Governor also vetoed a number of aquaculture projects approved by the Legislature totaling more than \$5 million. For those of you who worked hard on those projects, I can only tell you to continue to engage the system, find out what the appropriate agency or funding mechanism might be for your ideas, and continue to work for what you believe in. Most importantly, please remember to call or send a card to your Legislators thanking them. Many will be leaving office due to term limits. They have been very good to us over the years and it is always nice to receive thanks from those who have benefitted from your years of service in public office.

The Division of Aquaculture has a new website www.FloridaAquaculture.com It includes an updated copy of the Florida Aquaculture Plan and the proposed Rule and proposed manual for Aquaculture Best Management Practices. The comment period for the proposed BMPs has passed but the Division is planning to hold some BMP workshops over the next few months. They can be reached at 850-488-4033. Having the Division of Aquaculture far exceeded my wildest expectations. We need to all work closely with Sherman Wilhelm, the Director, and his staff. I believe a future definition of partnership will be FAA and the Division of Aquaculture. Let's all give them our full

support while they develop and implement their programs and functions.

At the federal level, EPA has started the process on proposed rulemaking on effluent guidelines for aquaculture. It is EPA's desire to reduce nutrient loadings and improve the quality of our Nation's waters. It is uncertain as to how these new EPA regulations, if completed and adopted, will impact our state BMP process. NAA is actively participating in the process as are many of our extension and university researchers from throughout the country. The MUMS or minor use minor species legislation was recently introduced into Congress. It is supported by a number of agriculture commodity groups throughout the nation and has strong support from FDA and USDA. Again, NAA has been in a leadership role and has been actively raising lobbying support to help make sure Congress passes this critical piece of legislation. The aquaculture industry has the most to gain from the MUMS legislation. Info: NAA 304-728-2167 or naa@intrepid.net or www.natlaquaculture.org

At press time the 1999 FASS Florida Aquaculture Survey was at the printer and will be released any day now. We anticipate a lower overall value for aquaculture in Florida from the 1997 report due to natural disasters impacting clam growers in 1998 and a decline in tropical fish sales. By the way, tropical fish farmers have teamed with DACS to develop a strong industry driven marketing program. The FASS survey is available online at www.nass.usda.gov/ll or by calling DACS 850-488-4033.

Finally, our annual meeting is just around the corner, October 13-14 at Harbor Branch. We have a block of rooms at the Kadisson on the ocean and should be a fun and informing meeting. Details are inside or call the Association office at 863-293-5710 and please not our NEW AREA CODE! Have a great summer and try to live easy!

Sincerely,

Mike Norton, President