



# FLORIDA *Aquaculture* ASSOCIATION

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

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## SUMMER 2009 NEWSLETTER

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### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

As I reported in our last newsletter, our Association hired a new lobbyist, Cathy Vogel, to represent our industry during the 2009 legislative session. Fortunately, she was able to spend some time with our former lobbyist, Kay Young, who gave her a crash course in the field of aquaculture. From the time we hired Cathy, she had a steep learning curve to learn about our industry and the agencies that regulate us. Cathy did a remarkable job in pushing forward the issues that matter to our members. Early in the session she successfully fought off an attempt by the taxation committee to eliminate sales tax exemptions for fish breeders. This would have had a very detrimental impact on all types of aquatic producers, if we were to have lost our tax exemptions on fish feed, shipping containers, chemicals, and other exemptions enjoyed by the agricultural community. Another issue was the inclusion of aquaculture property in the working waterfront property tax bill that was approved by voters last fall. The referendum must be put into state statutes to take effect and this will be high on their priority list for the 2010 session. We are in excellent shape to be included in the bill favorably when it is taken up in the coming session. Although we were successful in obtaining funding for the Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory and the FAME program, the legislature did not fund the ARC projects list this year. Hopefully the 2010 – 11 ARC projects will get funded providing that the State's budget will so allow. Elsewhere in this newsletter is Ms. Vogel's end of session legislative report.

Last month at Mote Marine Lab in Sarasota, FAA partnered with the Florida Marine Science Educators Association at their 2009 conference. FAA presented two educational sessions to make teachers aware of Florida's aquaculture industries and the various aquaculture

curriculums being offered throughout Florida to middle and high school students. The conference was well attended with 140 participants. FAA also had a tabletop exhibit and assisted the Association with the sponsorship of conference materials. This was made possible by a grant FAA received from the Department of Agriculture and the ARC. I would like to thank the individuals who gave a presentation: Carlos Martinez, Portia Sapp, Leslie Sturmer, Courtney Ohs, Cathy Vogel, Amber Garr and Maratha Campbell. All in all, it was a very informative and educational meeting, and I feel FAA was successful in educating the FMSEA attendees about the diversified commodities of Florida's aquaculture industry.

I'm sure I don't have to tell you that the economy remains foremost on every business owner's mind. All of our commodity representatives at our recent Board meeting reported that sales are down. In reading various business publications, a theme for all business owners is to provide good customer service, watch your costs, and stay on top of collections. As one of our commodity reps said, "Business would be bad, if we had any." As I'm often reminded, there's no need to worry about things you can't control. Eventually, the economy will turn around. It always has, and we will see a return to better times.

As you may or may not be aware, two of our Directors, Don Bryne and Frank Hoff, are dealing with health concerns. On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, I want to wish them both a speedy recovery.

Sincerely,

*Marty Tanner*

