

FLORIDA'S AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY

Over a century of agriculture
beneath the waves...



The African cichlids in the Commissioner's Office aquarium were donated by Imperial Tropicals and the aquarium by the Florida Tropical Fish Farms Association



WHAT DOES THE DIVISION OF AQUACULTURE DO?

- ✓ Regulate and facilitate the growth of the aquaculture industry in Florida
- ✓ Educate stakeholders on the Florida aquaculture industry
- ✓ Manage the Shellfish Harvesting Area Classification Program in Florida state waters
- ✓ Oversee the Aquaculture Certificate of Registration Program and compliance with Aquaculture Best Management Practices
- ✓ Manage the Shellfish Processing Plant Certification and Inspection Program to ensure safe and quality product reaches consumers



PROMOTING THE GROWTH OF AQUACULTURE WHILE PROTECTING FLORIDA'S ENVIRONMENT

Florida Department of Agriculture and
Consumer Services

Division of Aquaculture

600 South Calhoun St., Suite 217

Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Aquaculture_Web@FDACS.gov

www.FDACS.gov

More Information

www.FDACS.gov/Division-Offices/Aquaculture



www.FDACS.gov/Education/Aquaculture-Educator-Resources



The History of Aquaculture

Aquaculture has been practiced for at least three thousand years, beginning with small carp ponds in China. Production methods remained small-scale until the population boom after World War II in the 1950s. The aquaculture industry is now the fastest growing food production system worldwide.

- 1880s - The first oyster cultch planting for aquaculture happens in the Gulf of America.
- Early 1900s - Stock enhancement, alligator, and ornamental fish aquaculture comes to Florida.
- 1980s-1990s - Florida sees a boom in large scale production farms.
- 1984 - Aquaculture Policy Act is passed and the Aquaculture Review Council is created.
- 1996 - **"Aquaculture is Agriculture"** and creation of the Aquaculture Certificate of Registration Program.
- 1997 - The Florida aquaculture industry's farm-gate value passes \$100 million for the first time.
- 1998 - The Division of Aquaculture is established.



AQUACULTURE IN FLORIDA

FLORIDA AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY HAS THE GREATEST PRODUCT DIVERSITY IN THE NATION, WITH OVER 1,000 COMMERCIAL FARMS RAISING OVER 1,500 VARIETIES OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS!



What makes Florida suitable for aquaculture?

- The warm climate allows farmers to raise tropical and subtropical species at a lower cost. Just imagine trying to keep an outdoor pond heated during a cold northern winter!
- Several international shipping ports allow farmers to get products to customers quickly. This is incredibly important when shipping live animals for the aquarium trade, as well as getting consumers the freshest seafood products possible.
- The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services acts as a one stop shop as the main regulatory agency for aquaculture. This helps streamline the permitting process and remove some of the financial burden from Florida farmers.

What does aquaculture farming look like?

The methods used to raise aquaculture products are as diverse as the commodities themselves! Systems can range from large multi-acre ponds for catfish to small 1/4-acre ponds for angelfish; large recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS) that fill an entire warehouse for salmon, to small recirculating aquaria in a garage for axolotls; leases with floating cages for oysters or bottom planting for clams, to winding, shallow river-like ponds with plenty of nesting embankments for alligators.



Aquaculture has increased globally by more than 400% since 1990! Due to consumer demand for seafood, ornamental products, and the numerous uses of aquaculture products, demand will continue to rise. While the industry has faced many hurdles in past decades, economic investment in the industry and technological advancements means the future of aquaculture in Florida looks bright!

Florida is #1 in freshwater ornamental plant and fish production in the country!

Did you know that alligators are aquaculture products?

Levy County alone has **210** aquaculture farms, the most in the state!

