



Aquaculture Certificate of Registration

600 South Calhoun Street, Suite 217
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1300

Tallahassee Office: (850) 617-7600

Bartow Office: (863) 578-1870

Email:

Aquaculture_Certificate@FDACS.gov

Website: www.FDACS.gov

Raising aquatic species in Florida for commercial sale must acquire an Aquaculture Certificate of Registration from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) on an annual basis. The certificate authorizes the production, harvest and sale of aquaculture products, identifies your aquaculture products as agriculture and identifies you as a commercial farmer. It also entitles you to the same benefits bestowed upon other agricultural producers, including tax benefits and reduction of the number of permits you may need from other agencies.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

FDACS, through the [Florida Aquaculture Policy Act, Chapter 597, Florida Statutes \(F.S.\)](#), established the Aquaculture Best Management Practices (BMPs) as a means of assuring that aquaculture farms have minimal environmental impact. These practices represent a mutually beneficial relationship between commercial aquaculture production and natural resource protection. Aquaculturists adopt BMPs that are appropriate for the size, production system design, location and species of their farm. All Aquaculture Certificate of Registration holders must abide by the [Aquaculture BMPs](#). Any person failing to meet the BMPs and/or refusing to implement the BMPs must obtain all necessary permits and authorizations from the appropriate regulatory authority pursuant to [Rule 5L-3.007\(3\), Florida Administrative Code \(F.A.C.\)](#).



SHELLFISH HARVESTER EDUCATION TRAINING (HET)

All Aquaculture Certificate of Registration applicants who list bivalve mollusks (i.e., oysters or clams) as a product on their application must complete the (HET) on a yearly basis. (HET) provides training in sanitary shellfish harvesting, transportation and handling. It is designed to help shellfish harvesters minimize the growth of *Vibrio* spp. bacteria and to reduce the risk of associated illnesses. At the end of the course, a certificate of completion will be issued as proof of training. Training may be completed either [online](#) or in person. Training for the upcoming certification year begins April 1 of each year. You can call to make arrangements to complete the training in person at one of the following FDACS offices:

Apalachicola: (850) 653-8317
Melbourne: (321) 984-4890
Port Charlotte: (941) 613-0954
Cedar Key: (352) 543-1084
Tallahassee: (850) 617-7600

APPLYING FOR AN AQUACULTURE CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

To apply for an Aquaculture Certificate of Registration, visit the [Aquaculture Portal](#) or contact FDACS at (850) 617-7600 or email Aquaculture_Certificate@FDACS.gov. For application guidance see the [Initial Aquaculture Certificate of Registration Guidance Document](#).

The fee to apply for or renew a certificate is \$100. Mail the completed application, along with your proof of training (if applicable) and the \$100 application fee via check or money order to:

FDACS
Post Office Box 6710
Tallahassee, Florida 32314-6710

You can also pay fees online via the [Aquaculture Portal](#).

Once your application has been received, Division staff will contact you to schedule an initial site visit, if required, and review your facility plan and pertinent BMPs. Division staff will also conduct facility inspections annually, at a minimum, to ensure BMP compliance. Aquaculture submerged land leaseholders are also required to maintain a valid Aquaculture Certificate of Registration as a condition of their lease agreement. **Certificates expire on June 30 of each year.**

Applicants can contact the Division for an onsite review of existing operations and a pre-construction review of the farm site and facility design plans. Producers may also visit University of Florida (UF) operated aquaculture education, demonstration and research facilities that are implementing BMPs. See [Aquaculture Production and Technical Assistance](#) for extension support contact information.

NOTE: The annual registration fee is waived for each elementary, middle or high school or vocational school that participates in the aquaculture certification program pursuant to [597.004\(1\)\(h\) F.S.](#) Please contact FDACS prior to applying to discuss if your fee should be waived.

FACILITY PLAN AND TIMELINE REQUIREMENTS FOR AN AQUACULTURE CERTIFICATION OF REGISTRATION

New applicants must submit a facility plan which is briefly outlined below. Contact the Division for assistance with creating a facility plan.

Facility Summary

- Name of company and/or applicant name
- Facility location (address or Parcel ID)
- Property ownership documentation or lease agreement (if applicable)
- Property flood zone information
- County Zoning and Land Use information (plans for Use Permits or changes if applicable)
- Brief description of business, products offered and target market (e.g. fry, fingerlings, food, ornamental, live, on ice, filleted, wholesale, retail etc.)

Note: Do not provide cost, price or buyer contact information.



Ponds must be constructed in accordance with the [USDA-NRCS](#) or [UF/IFAS](#) guidelines.

Facility Description

- Total land acreage, pond acreage or water volume of tanks or raceways
- Number and size of ponds/tubs/tanks
- Species to be raised
- Sketch of the facility design
- List of all applicable BMPs to be implemented
- Water source and water flow/treatment schematic
- Description of species containment measures
- Biosecurity measures or plan

Timeline for Construction and Production

- Start and end dates for facility construction
- Plan for additional permits (e.g. Water Use Permit)
- Additional phases or milestones
- Stocking dates and rates/densities
- Harvest dates and amount
- Describe future expansion plans

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can my employees each get duplicate cards with my certification number?

No, there will be one card issued per aquaculturist listed on the Aquaculture Certificate of Registration application.

I have two submerged lands leases for shellfish culture. Do I need two certificates?

Each submerged land leaseholder needs only one Aquaculture Certificate of Registration, which will list all leases.

What if I have multiple upland production (farms) locations?

For upland aquaculture facilities, a certification is required for each separate facility location. If under the same name as the Aquaculture Certificate of Registration, submerged land leases can be listed with an upland site on one certificate.

I said on my application that I would abide by BMPs, what are they?

BMPs are developed with each segment of the industry in mind and are defined as the methods a farmer uses for construction and operation of a facility which result in minimal environmental impacts. The BMP manual is available [online](#) or by contacting the Division of Aquaculture.

I have a few aquaria in my garage to raise tropical fish. Do I need a certification?

Yes, if you sell the aquatic organisms you raise. No, if you are a hobbyist.

I am an authorized user on a submerged land lease for shellfish culture. Do I need the certificate?

Yes. Each year, turn in an *Aquaculture Leaseholder and Authorized User Agreement* form, along with an application. This form is available to download [online](#) and must be signed by you and the leaseholder and notarized. You will also need to complete the Shellfish Harvester Education training and send proof of completion with the forms. All forms and certificates expire June 30 of each year.

It's December, and I'm applying for the certification. Will it be valid through December of next year?

No, the Aquaculture Certificate of Registration is valid through June 30 each year, regardless of when you apply.

