



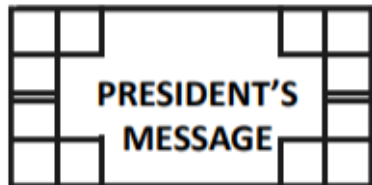
# FLORIDA *Aquaculture* ASSOCIATION

*Representing the Florida aquaculture industry since 1983.*

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## Quarter 1, 2021 Newsletter

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With 2020 in our rear-view mirror, we now need to focus on 2021 and all that this entails. The good news is that Florida and the entire United States is starting to open up, some areas faster than others. From an industry perspective, this is a hopeful sign. However, it is unlikely that any of our businesses will ever be operated as they were pre-Covid. Markets have changed, rules and regulations have changed and as an industry we need to continue to change and adapt in order to survive and flourish.

As mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, the Florida Legislative Session officially convenes on March 2, 2021 and adjourns on April 30, 2021. Even though the Session is just starting, your legislators have been working on relevant issues for months. You should be aware of the following bills that could directly affect your business include the following:

**SB 88; The Right to Farm Act** which expands and modernizes protections currently available under the Act to protect farmers from lawsuits based on their routine farming and agricultural activities.

**HB 7/SB 72;** seeks to protect churches, schools and businesses from “frivolous” COVID-19 related lawsuits.

**HB 1099 Ethan’s Law;** seeks to require operators on boats smaller than 26 feet long to wear engine cutoff switches that stop the vessel when the person falls overboard.

The internet is your friend. I encourage everyone to “google” these bills, read the actual bill language, and determine how these proposed bills, if enacted, will affect your businesses. Your legislators want to hear from you. Tell them what you think!

Although there is light at the end of the tunnel, Covid is still with us. In addition to the above proposed Florida Bills, for those aquaculture businesses that operate a boat, you should be aware of a couple of recent Federal announcements that affect you right now. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued an order, [Requirement for Persons to Wear Masks while on Transportation Hubs](#), requiring all persons traveling on all commercial vessels to wear a mask. In keeping with these orders, the US Coast Guard (USCG) published a Marine Safety Bulletin on February 1, 2021, Issue #02-21, [COVID-19 Safety Requirements in the Maritime Transportation System](#).

According to the National Aquaculture Association, initial conversations with USCG District representatives indicate small, coastal vessels operated by shellfish and finfish farmers are subject to the USCG mask requirement. If only one person is on a vessel; no mask is required. If two or more are aboard; masks are required.

As always, I encourage you to frequently visit the FAA website; [www.flaa.org](http://www.flaa.org) for the latest information on Federal and State announcements relevant to our industry. We strive to post all relevant information and update these posts often.

Wishing all a safe and successful 2021,  
Jim Michaels  
President



**FLORIDA**  
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Food Fish- Joe Cardenas, Ft. Pierce, (561)866-7092

Shellfish- Leslie Sturmer, Cedar Key, (352)543-5057

Suppliers- Thomas Drury, Apopka, (407)992-5601

Tropical Fish- David Rawlins, Lithia, (813)737-3418

Lobbyist- Jim Spratt, Tallahassee, (850)228-1296

Executive Director- Tiffany Conner (813)438-3522

## Upcoming Events

### **Florida FFA State Aquaculture Career Development Event**

April 8th-9th at the UF IFAS TAL

### **Florida State Fair**

April 22nd- May 2nd in Tampa

### **Aquaculture America**

August 11th-14th in San Antonio, Texas

## What's on your bumper?

Thousands of dollars have been raised from the sale of the Aquaculture license plate to benefit aquaculture education, research, and development programs. Don't forget- the FAA receives funding from the Florida Aquaculture license plate to carry out important educational programs.

The FAA newsletter is funded with a grant through the HBOI Foundation.

We are grateful for their continued support for the FAA.



**Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute Foundation**

# Florida Aquaculture Legislative Updates from FAA Lobbyist Jim Spratt

First, I hope you and your families are well and healthy and are preparing for what should be an exciting 2021. As we close the chapter on one of the most challenging years this country has ever endured, let's hope the new year is full of more opportunities than challenges.

Believe it or not the beginning of the 2021 Legislative session just began on Tuesday March 2nd, and given the safety protocols which have been implemented this session it has certainly been unique. To be frank, the Capitol remains largely off limits with the House offering limited access to committee meetings and the Senate Office building remains closed for meetings. To this end, during the January committee meetings, the Senate has relied on video streaming technology to broadcast committee meetings and to accept public comment on various issues. The House, while not fully closed, is discouraging the normal foot traffic associated with committee meetings. Furthermore, as you are most likely aware, many of the groups which have historically done "trips to the hill" to advocate on their issues have canceled or postpone those activities for 2021. Thus, as the gavel drops on this session, the relationships you have with your legislators and your ability to respond to grassroots calls to action will be significantly more important.

Regardless, the Legislature will conduct its business which means bills will be presented, discussed, debated and the Legislature will pass a budget as required by the State's Constitution. In other words, even with limitations, we will be marking sure to cover our "assets"! As you might expect, state economist are projecting a budget shortfall due the impacts of the novel Corona Virus. Based on this reality, there will be extraordinarily little in any extra money to fund projects and, in fact, it means we will be watching closely to make sure sales-tax exemptions important to our industry remain intact as well as avoiding any discussions around raising the cost on state fees or permits which are required to conduct business.

Although it is still incredibly early in the legislative process, just beginning the 2nd full week of session. We expect the usual assortment of good and bad ideas to be filed by legislators. We are currently working on legislation which would strengthen Florida's Right to Farm law; potential legislation to strengthen the Bert J. Harris Private Property Rights Act; removing the statutory barrier to the sale of specific species of fish as food fish; and, as part of a much larger business group, working on liability protections from COVID-19 lawsuits.

On the concerning side of the ledger, we are already watching a bevy of animal welfare bills which, are certainly all well-intended yet, may have unintended consequences. For example, the is legislation filed which would restrict/eliminate the sale of dogs and cats in pet store. Although not specifically targeted at aquaculture species, this legislation certainly can be the nexus for expansion into other plants, animals and fish commonly offered for sale.

Certainly, as we move through the first weeks of session, we will have a clearer picture of the ideas which are in play for the 2021 session.

Thank you for the opportunity to work on your behalf and, as always, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me @ (850)228-1296 or jim@magnoliastrategiesllc.com

Jim Spratt

Magnolia Strategies, LLC

# Commodity Reports

## **Alligators- Allen Register**

This season is one of the less active in the alligator industry. With this being said, there has been activity within larger fashion houses that has led to an increase in hide demand. The bill on banning the sale of alligator hide products in California was thrown out and at this time, most producers are optimistic as this is not their only source of revenue.

## **Aquatic Plants- Brandon McLane**

The first quarter of 2021 is proving to be much different than 2020. Sales have been strong and demand high. There are some instances where demand is higher than supply at the moment. At this point, sales may even be higher than those of pre-COVID days.

## **Food Fish- Joe Cardenas**

Sales and interest in the industry have been increasing. Interest in the shrimp industry, new farms, and expansion of existing farms, has been high. Sales for Tilapia, Pompano, Hybrid Striped Bass, Farm-Raised Salmon, and other species have been high with demand often higher than supply.

## **Shellfish- Leslie Sturmer**

Clam sales over the holiday season were higher than in some previous years, due to increased sales at grocery chains. Demand post-holiday has dropped as is typical for this time of year. Prices have also dropped slightly. There are a few growers leaving the industry as a result of COVID-19. The supply of cultured oysters has been low as a result of the lasting effects of Hurricane Michael, winter storms, and seed supply. Red tide closures are ongoing in southwest Florida.

## **Suppliers- Tom Drury**

In the supplies and equipment industry, sales are increasing as demand is returning back to normal. A few supplies to keep an eye on are fitting, valves, and some filters. There seems to be a supply issue resulting from COVID-19 complications that is causing an increase in price and/or decrease in supply.

## **Tropical Fish- David Rawlins**

Sales and demand continue to stay high for ornamentals. As people are beginning to enter into the hobby, more and more fish are needed in the industry. As imports slowly begin to come back, demand has backed down a bit but the call for domestic fish is still positive. Despite supply line issues, the FTFFA Co-Op store is still successful.

## **FAA Commodity Representatives**

Commodity Representatives serve on the FAA Board to ensure that all aquaculture commodities and sectors are represented. We also recommend reaching out to your commodity representative with questions or concerns. If you are unsure about which commodity you would fall into or if you do not fit into one of the following commodities, please reach out to Tiffany Conner at [Tiffany@flaa.org](mailto:Tiffany@flaa.org) or 813.438.FLAA (3522).

**Alligators:** Allen Register, 863.675.0623, [allen@gatorama.com](mailto:allen@gatorama.com)

**Aquatic Plants:** Brandon McLane, 954.472.5120, [brandon@floridaaquatic.com](mailto:brandon@floridaaquatic.com)

**Food Fish:** Joe Cardenas, 561.866.7092, [joe@aquacofarms.com](mailto:joe@aquacofarms.com)

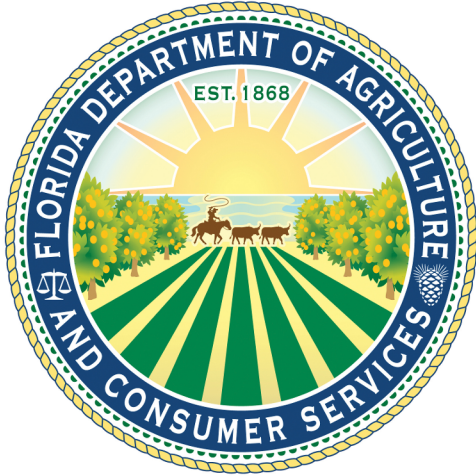
**Shellfish:** Leslie Sturmer, 352.543.5057, [lnst@ufl.edu](mailto:lnst@ufl.edu)

**Suppliers:** Tom Drury, 844.946.4272, [druryt14@gmail.com](mailto:druryt14@gmail.com)

**Tropical Fish:** David Rawlins, 813.737.3418, [rawlins@ij.net](mailto:rawlins@ij.net)



# FDACS Division of Aquaculture Report



2020 may have been an interesting year due to the beginning of the global pandemic but 2021 is shaping up to be an important and active year for Florida aquaculture. As of now, FDACS Division of Aquaculture is still going through the process of modifying their Army Corps permit. This edit of their existing permit will include permission to cultivate seaweed and scallops. There is optimism for these permits as there have been a few new reviewers added but the process of making these changes are still in progress.

FDACS Division of Aquaculture is working towards changing Rule 18-21, Florida Administrative Code that authorizes submerged land leases. This rule modification will allow FDACS the capability of granting restoration permits along with their other various types of submerged land lease permits. Also for submerged land leases, FDACS has changed the transfer prohibition policy that was in place. With proposed changes, only the initial land lease agreements prohibits transfer during the initial five-year period of the lease.

Largemouth Bass Legislation is a key issue for Florida aquaculture. At this point, the bills (SB1018 & HB669) have been filed .

FDACS has partnered with UF IFAS Tropical Aquaculture Lab to secure funding for an aquaculture educator workshop which will take place July 21st-23rd. Twenty teachers in attendance will be awarded recirculating aquaponics systems for their school programs. Another educational and aquaculture literacy project that has launched is the Florida Aquaculture Commodity poster. This infographic shows many commodities cultured within a specific area of Florida and this is represented throughout the entire state. If you would like a copy of the commodity poster please contact [Katrina.Bayliss@fdacs.gov](mailto:Katrina.Bayliss@fdacs.gov)

Many entities were instrumental in gaining local, state, and federal funding for aquaculture producers from USDA, NOAA, and others in response to COVID-19. While there are talks of further funding for agriculture, there have been no major movements or announcements at this time.

The BADDL would need funding to establish an aquaculture division. Having a facility or division of the BADDL that is dedicated to aquaculture is would be beneficial to the industry and would require support by the industry. At this time, it is recommended that individuals and groups make their local representatives and lobbyists aware of this need so that when it comes to a legislative decision to fund this project, more voting members are aware of the need for an aquaculture division at the BADDL.

Please check the FDACS Division of Aquaculture website regularly for more updates.

## **Amazonas Creates Job Board**

The FTFFA has partnered with the popular magazine and online platform, Amazonas, to develop a comprehensive job board listing for those looking for employment and businesses seeking employees.

You can see available jobs and post your own career openings by visiting:

<https://www.amazonasmagazine.com/aquarium-jobs/>

# National Aquaculture Association Update

On February 24th, the National Aquaculture Association held its first virtual membership meeting. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the rescheduling of Aquaculture America, the NAA opted to hold a virtual membership meeting for the safety and wellbeing of its membership. With the new age and acceptance of technology, this meeting had a great turnout with representatives from numerous state organizations, species associations, and individual members.

Jim Parsons, NAA President, shared amazing information about the efforts NAA has completed this year. While 2020 caused international closures and tremendous impacts to the global aquaculture industry, the NAA became busier than ever to support the US aquaculture industry. First and foremost, the NAA was instrumental in ensuring aquaculture was recognized as an industry in need of support due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of these successful efforts, many aquaculture producers were able to obtain federal funding through CFAP 1 and 2, the NOAA CARES Act, and other funding opportunities.

Let us look at the statistics:

- NOAA CARES Act- \$300 million to fisheries and shellfish producers
- CFAP1- \$87.3 million disbursed among just 2,222 applicants
- CFAP2- 2,755 applicants, awaiting monetary values

A major component of gaining aquaculture recognition for these federal funding opportunities was data collected through the Virginia Tech and Ohio State COVID-19 Surveys. An additional survey will be released in the summer of 2021. Please complete these surveys when they are released as they are extremely helpful when advocating for the aquaculture industry.

Along with active COVID-19 assistance efforts, the NAA has also made tremendous strides in resurrecting the National Aquaculture Economic Development Initiative. This initiative began in 2017 and will continue to address financial barriers, infrastructure, and workforce development, expand market opportunities, and address social issues. The National Aquaculture Economic Development Initiative is similar to the guidelines of other countries that we currently import seafood from.

The National Aquaculture Health Plan and Standards is an additional project that the NAA has captured in their already busy year. This plan sets to promote aquatic animal health through a re-write of the 2008 plan. The plan will include pathogen reporting and standardized testing, lab accreditation, education, and training, along with addressing biosecurity, surveillance, and threat response. A successful re-write of the decade-old plan will allow for more applicable plans for the new era of aquaculture production.

Moving past 2020 and into 2021, the NAA plans to remain very active in its efforts to support the aquaculture industry. Plans for the 2021 year include amending the Merchant Marine Act, support offshore marine aquaculture, secure the National Aquaculture Health Plan and Standards to aid in obtaining funding for the USDA APHIS Aquaculture Program, work towards requiring imported products to meet US standards, and continue positive engagements with FDA CVM. The NAA is a farmer created and directed nonprofit trade association. To support this work and keep up to date with their efforts, become a member by clicking on: <http://thenaa.net/why-join-naa>.

NATIONAL  
**Aquaculture**  
ASSOCIATION

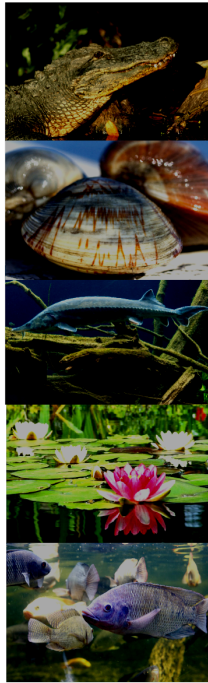


# Florida Aquaculture Association

The mission of the Florida Aquaculture Association is to provide a unified voice for the Florida aquaculture industry that ensures its sustainability, protects its profitability, and encourages its development in an environmentally responsible manner.

## What we do for Florida aquaculture:

- **Keep industry guidelines up-to-date**
  - FAA's advice is sought for updating the FL Aquaculture Best Management Practices Manual and provides updates for the FL Aquaculture Plan
- **Work with lobbyists and legislatures to support aquaculture**
  - Funding for research and extension services, tax exemptions, and federal insurances are all fought for by FAA lobbyists
- **Provide support for the future of aquaculture**
  - Partner with aquaculture educators throughout the state to provide them with the resources necessary to properly educate students about the aquaculture industry in Florida and help them prepare for the FL Aquaculture Technician Certification.



## Benefits of Membership:

- Networking opportunities with other aquaculture professionals
- Access to the 'Members Only' forum on the FAA website
- Fresh and current news about Florida aquaculture
- Direct information from the NAA, FDACS Division of Aquaculture, and other aquaculture organizations.

*Pictured: FL Ag Commissioner Nikki Fried and FAA Board Member, Barry Hurt discussing FL Aqua at the Fresh From Florida Ag Breakfast at the FL State Fair*



## FAA Member Events:

- Taste of Florida Agriculture Reception in Tallahassee
- Fresh from Florida Agriculture Breakfast at the Florida State Fair
- FAA Annual General Membership Meeting

## Membership Application

Please send the application and dues to P.O. Box 2974 Riverview, FL 33578

Check must be made payable to the Florida Aquaculture Association.

You can also join online at [www.flaa.org/join-now](http://www.flaa.org/join-now)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company/ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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How would you prefer to receive your quarterly newsletter?

Printed     Email     Both

**Active Membership (\$150):** Only persons, companies, or organizations actively cultivating aquaculture products within the State of Florida are eligible to become active members. **FDACS AQ#:** \_\_\_\_\_

Commodity Group (Check all that apply):  Alligators  Aquatic Plants  Shellfish  Food Fish  Tropical Fish  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Associate Membership (\$100):** Any individual or entity engaged in providing equipment, supplies, materials, or services used in Florida's aquaculture industry or any individual with an interest in Florida's aquaculture and who shares the objectives of the FAA. Check all that apply:  Consultant  Education  Extension  Manufacturer  Research  Service  Supplier

**Affiliate (\$50):** Any person, firm, or organization interested in Florida Aquaculture.

**Sudents (\$20):** Any individual currently enrolled in an accredited educational institute.



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