

SEA HARVEST NEWS

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Trade Adjustment Assistance Approved Again

The Foreign Agriculture Service announced that trade adjustment assistance for shrimp fishermen is available again this year for shrimp marketed in 2003.

Alabama fishermen must file their applications by April 11, 2005 to qualify for assistance based on shrimp landed in Alabama. Fishermen may also apply for assistance based on landings in other states. However, they must meet the filing deadline in those states. Filing deadlines are as follows:

State	Deadline	Adjustment (dollars per pound)
Georgia	2/28/05	.39
Texas	2/28/05	.28
North Carolina	2/28/05	.08
South Carolina	2/28/05	.25
Alabama	4/11/05	.04
Louisiana	4/11/05	.05
Mississippi	Not known	

To qualify, fishermen must be able to document sales of shrimp and that their net fishing income declined from 2002 to 2003. The maximum payment is limited to \$10,000.00 per person.

All questions and applications should be directed to the Farm Service Agency. The Farm

Service Agency in our area is located at:

Baldwin County Farm Service Agency
1504 A South US Highway 31
Bay Minette, AL 36507-2611
Phone: 251-937-7196 Ext. 2
Fax: 251-580-0026

NOTE: FISHERMEN CAN APPLY AT THIS OFFICE FOR TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE BASED ON LANDINGS IN ANY OF THE ELIGIBLE STATES. HOWEVER, YOU MUST MEET THE DEADLINE FOR THAT STATE. IN OTHER WORDS, IF YOU WANT TO APPLY FOR LANDINGS IN TEXAS, YOU NEED TO HAVE YOUR APPLICATION IN BY FEBRUARY 28, 2005.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Training

In order to qualify for trade adjustment assistance, fishermen are required to take a short training class from the Cooperative Extension Service (our office). Fishermen who took the training last year (2004) will not need to take the training this year. Fishermen who apply this year and did not take the training last year will need to take the training. We will be contacting fishermen who applied for trade adjustment assistance about where and when the training will be held. Please note that the deadline for completing the training is usually 90 days later than the deadline for the application.

Fishing Regulations

Bag limits, size limits, closed seasons, and prohibited species make fishing complicated. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council has pamphlets that summarize federal recreational and commercial fishing regulations. The pamphlets are available at www.gulfcouncil.org. Click on "Fishing Rules". Alabama regulations can be found at

www.outdooralabama.com.

Asian Oysters

Oyster management in Alabama has its controversies but Chesapeake Bay is facing a major decision about the future of its oyster resources.

Oyster landings in Chesapeake Bay have declined from 6.5 million bushels in the early 1980s to about 70 thousand bushels in recent years. The decline is blamed on two oyster diseases: MSX and Dermo. Other factors such as over fishing and failure to replant shells have also played a role. Both diseases kill oysters before they are large enough to harvest and both diseases flourish in high salinity water. A recent drought in the eastern United States has only made the disease situation worst.

Researchers have undertaken the development of disease resistant oysters to address the problem. Unfortunately, it has proven difficult to establish resistance to both diseases in the same oyster. Still, the introduction of disease resistance oysters has shown some promise but the recovery timeline is not fast enough to save the Chesapeake Bay oyster industry.

Researchers looking for alternate solutions have experimented with growing the non-native Chinese oyster in bags and baskets. Initial studies showed that the Chinese oyster is more resilient to disease and grows faster than the native eastern oyster. Chinese oysters grown at high salinity sites had 85% survival while native oysters suffered 100% mortality.

Given this promising information, the Chesapeake Bay oyster industry and the governor of Maryland are in support of introducing Chinese oysters into the Bay without further delay. On the other side are all the concerns that come with introducing exotic species. Even the best

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intentioned exotic species introductions have had unintended consequences. The National Academy of Science has recommended the completion of ongoing studies before a decision is made. Meanwhile, the Maryland governor continues to advocate for a quick decision.

One overlooked aspect of introducing the oysters into Chesapeake Bay, is that the oysters could, with time, spread to other oyster growing areas along the east coast and even to the Gulf of Mexico. No one can predict with any certainty what the consequences would be of the Asian oyster becoming widely established in U.S. waters.