

2013 Shellfish Aquaculture At A Glance



NRCS has been helping people help the land for more than 75 years. The Agency also provides assistance to producers whose harvests come from the sea. Through a special partnership with the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, NRCS is offering funding to help Chesapeake Bay growers improve water quality and increase oyster habitat.

Program Description



The successful growth and harvesting of shellfish contributes to and depends on good water quality. The Virginia Aquaculture Program is designed to enhance not only the sustainability of aquaculture but also to reduce adverse impacts on water quality for shellfish producers.

Program sign-up is continuous with periodic evaluation and preapprovals throughout the year. Call the NRCS field office at your local USDA Service Center or visit us online at www.va.nrcs.usda.gov for more information. To find your local office, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/.

Resource Concern

Practices

Eligibility

Water Quality



Waterman photo by Lynda Richardson. Other images courtesy of the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences.

Gear Cycling: When gear on site becomes fouled, the grower will replace it with clean gear. The fouled gear will be brought on shore, air dried and cleaned in an approved area off site. Payments ranging from \$26 to \$180 may be approved depending on gear needs.

Oyster Bed Restoration: Successful oyster growth occurs on beds that have a firm substrate. Leased land that needs improvements to the bottom for spat on shell and wild oyster production may qualify for oyster bed restoration assistance. A payment of \$1.50/bushel for placement of new shell on the bottom to restore habitat may be approved.

Tidal bottoms within areas of Virginia's bays and rivers capable of supporting oysters are eligible.

Since tidal waters are considered State waters, most bottom aquaculture operations require a state lease.

Individual tracts of leased ground will only qualify one time for these practices.

Contracts are for one year with a \$5,000/year payment cap.

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