

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FORESTRY

2800 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, OK 73105-4912
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Get off to a good start with fish farming

Farm-raised fish is the fastest growing agricultural sector in world food production. Fish farming supplements catching wild fish and provides health conscious consumers with fresh, nutritious protein.

The first step in starting a new aquaculture, or fish farming, operation is becoming licensed through the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture's Animal Industry Services. This allows an aquaculture operation to commercially produce catfish, minnows, frogs, and other fish species for sale within the state. This license is limited to the sale of whole live fish as the act of processing aquatic species or selling processed aquatic species requires additional licensure through the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

There are species that have been designated as restricted by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and are prohibited from commercial propagation. This includes aquatic species such as paddlefish, bighead carp and alligator snapping turtles. The complete list of restricted aquatic species can be found at www.ag.ok.gov/ais/aquarestrict.pdf.

Invasive or nuisance aquatic fish and aquatic plants are also a concern within an aquaculture operation. These species include Asian carp, zebra mussels, didymo, and golden algae and can create problems within a system as well as within native waters if an accidental release occurs. Licensed aquaculture facilities are inspected to make sure these nuisance species have not been inadvertently introduced into a system from the purchase of new fish or from unkempt hauling units.

Aquaculture rules and other resources can be found on the ODAFF website at <http://www.ag.ok.gov/ais/aquaculture.htm>.

Questions and concerns about aquaculture licensing may be directed to Dr. Alicia Gorczyca-Southerland at 405-522-6136.

Additional resources and information about setting up an aquaculture operation are available on the Langston University website at <http://www2.luresext.edu/aquaculture/aquahome.htm>.

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Photo caption: A tank full of tilapia is positioned below an automatic fish feeder in the aquaculture system on the Langston University campus.