

AGRICULTURE CODE

TITLE 6. PRODUCTION, PROCESSING, AND SALE OF ANIMAL PRODUCTS

SUBTITLE A. BEES AND NONLIVESTOCK ANIMAL INDUSTRY

CHAPTER 134. REGULATION OF AQUACULTURE

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 134.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter only:

(1) "Cultured species" means aquatic animals or plants raised under conditions where at least a portion of their life cycle is controlled by an aquaculturist.

(2) "Exotic species" means a nonindigenous plant or animal not normally found in the public waters in the state.

(3) "Aquaculturist" or "fish farmer" means any person engaged in aquaculture or fish farming.

(4) "Aquaculture" or "fish farming" means the business of producing and selling cultured species raised in private facilities. Aquaculture or fish farming is an agricultural activity.

(5) "Private facility" means a pond, tank, cage, or other structure capable of holding cultured species in confinement wholly within or on private land or water or within or on permitted public land or water.

(6) "Operator" means any person or entity in control of or having responsibility for the daily operation of an aquaculture facility.

(7) "Commercial aquaculture facility" means an aquaculture facility designed primarily for the production of cultured species for the purposes of sale, barter, or exchange.

(8) "New aquaculture facility" means a commercial aquaculture facility whose owner or operator initially sought waste discharge authorization from the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission after January 19, 1999.

(9) "Coastal zone" has the meaning assigned by Section [33.004](#), Natural Resources Code.

Acts 1975, 64th Leg., ch. 545, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1975. Renumbered from Parks & Wildlife Code, Sec. 48.001 and amended by

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 637, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 491, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1239, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 711 (H.B. [2271](#)), Sec. 2, eff. June 12, 2023.

Sec. 134.002. SUPPORT OF AQUACULTURE. The department may:

- (1) promote aquaculture products;
- (2) provide technical assistance, including demonstrations, to aquaculturists;
- (3) provide coordinated support through colleges and universities and other governmental entities;
- (4) solicit financial support from the federal government for the aquaculture industry;
- (5) develop and expand the aquaculture industry to:
 - (A) stimulate the state's economy; and
 - (B) offer alternative crop opportunities; and
- (6) perform other functions and activities as required by law.

Added by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 637, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 491, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1239, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 848 (S.B. [703](#)), Sec. 27, eff. September 1, 2021.

Sec. 134.004. CONTRACTS. The department, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the Texas Animal Health Commission, and the Parks and Wildlife Department may contract with state, federal, or private entities for assistance in carrying out the purposes of this chapter.

Added by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 637, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 491, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1239, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 848 (S.B. [703](#)), Sec. 28, eff.

September 1, 2021.

Sec. 134.005. RULES. (a) The department and the Parks and Wildlife Commission shall adopt rules to carry out their respective duties under this chapter.

(b) Repealed by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 848 (S.B. 703), Sec. 56(8), eff. September 1, 2021.

(c) The rules may not conflict with rules issued under Section 134.020.

Added by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 637, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 491, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1239, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 848 (S.B. 703), Sec. 56(8), eff. September 1, 2021.

SUBCHAPTER B. AQUACULTURE REQUIREMENTS

Sec. 134.013. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SHRIMP PRODUCTION WITHIN THE COASTAL ZONE. (a) A commercial aquaculture facility located within the coastal zone and engaged in the production of shrimp must:

(1) obtain a site-specific wastewater discharge permit from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality before the facility may discharge wastewater if the facility will discharge wastewater or another substance into waters in the state;

(2) provide the report described in Subsection (b) to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality;

(3) obtain an amendment to its site-specific discharge permit from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality before the facility may increase the amount of discharge or change the nature of the discharge above levels allowed by the wastewater discharge permit issued by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, except as otherwise provided by Section 26.0191, Water Code; and

(4) provide the report described by Subsection (b) before the facility may increase the amount of discharge, or change

the nature of the discharge above levels allowed by the wastewater discharge permit issued by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, except as otherwise provided by Section [26.0191](#), Water Code.

(b) Before issuing a permit to a new aquaculture facility designed for the commercial production of shrimp that will discharge wastewater into waters in the state within the coastal zone, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality shall require the applicant to provide a report describing the existing environmental conditions at the proposed site, including aquatic habitat and the conditions of the waters in the state into which a discharge is proposed. The report must provide an assessment of any potential impacts of wastewater discharges on sensitive aquatic habitats in the area of the proposed site, significant impacts related to the construction or operation of the facility, and any mitigation actions proposed by the applicant.

(c) The applicant must provide the report required under Subsection (b) to the Parks and Wildlife Department. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality may not issue a wastewater discharge permit to a new aquaculture facility designed for the commercial production of shrimp and located within the coastal zone without consideration of the report described by Subsection (b).

(d) In coordination with the Parks and Wildlife Department, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality shall establish guidelines relating to the report required by Subsection (b) that:

(1) give public notice as to what the reporting requirements include; and

(2) minimize duplication of reporting requirements and other requirements related to the application for a wastewater discharge permit.

Acts 1975, 64th Leg., ch. 545, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1975. Renumbered from Parks & Wildlife Code, Sec. 48.004 and amended by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 637, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 491, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1239, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 848 (S.B. [703](#)), Sec. 30, eff.

September 1, 2021.

Sec. 134.016. RECORDS. (a) The operator of a commercial aquaculture facility shall maintain a record of sales of cultured species for at least one year. The record is open for inspection by designated employees of the Parks and Wildlife Department during normal business hours.

(b) A record of sale for commercially protected finfish as provided by Section 66.020, Parks and Wildlife Code, shall contain at least the following information:

- (1) invoice number;
- (2) date of shipment;
- (3) name and address of shipper;
- (4) name and address of receiver; and
- (5) number and weight of whole fish or fillets, by species, contained in the shipment.

Acts 1975, 64th Leg., ch. 545, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1975. Renumbered from Parks & Wildlife Code, Sec. 48.008 and amended by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 637, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 491, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1239, Sec. 4, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 848 (S.B. 703), Sec. 31, eff. September 1, 2021.

Sec. 134.017. CULTURE AND SALE OF CULTURED SPECIES. Cultured species of any kind, size, or number may be raised, possessed, transported, and sold anywhere, at any time, to any person, for any purpose by the operator of a commercial aquaculture facility unless prohibited by the Parks and Wildlife Code or regulation.

Acts 1975, 64th Leg., ch. 545, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1975. Renumbered from Parks & Wildlife Code, Sec. 48.009 and amended by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 637, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 491, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 848 (S.B. 703), Sec. 32, eff.

September 1, 2021.

Sec. 134.018. SALE OF CERTAIN FISH. (a) This section applies to the sale of fish:

(1) that are not on the Parks and Wildlife Department's list of exotic fish, shellfish, and aquatic plants;

(2) collected from a private facility on private land by a person who operates a commercial aquaculture facility;

(3) by the owner of the private facility from which the fish were collected;

(4) to manage the fish population in the private facility; and

(5) to a person who operates a commercial aquaculture facility.

(b) Not later than the 30th day after the sale of fish under this section, a buyer who operates a commercial aquaculture facility shall submit a copy of the invoice for the sale to the Parks and Wildlife Department. The seller and the buyer shall maintain a record of the sale for not less than one year. The record must contain at least:

(1) the invoice number;

(2) the date of the sale;

(3) the name and address of the seller;

(4) the physical location of the facility from which the fish were collected;

(5) the buyer's name and address and the name and address of the buyer's commercial aquaculture facility; and

(6) the number of fish sold.

(c) Sections [66.020](#) and [66.111](#), Parks and Wildlife Code, do not apply to a sale under this section.

Added by Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 759 (H.B. [3024](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2005.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 848 (S.B. [703](#)), Sec. 33, eff. September 1, 2021.

Sec. 134.020. EXOTIC SPECIES. (a) The Parks and Wildlife

Commission shall adopt rules regulating the importation, possession, propagation, and sale of harmful or potentially harmful exotic species by an aquaculturist.

(b) The Parks and Wildlife Commission, after consulting with the commissioner and an individual designated by the chairman of the board of regents of The Texas A&M University System, shall determine and publish a list of harmful or potentially harmful exotic species that an aquaculturist may not import, possess, or sell as part of the person's aquaculture activities.

(c) An aquaculturist may not release in public water harmful or potentially harmful exotic species except as provided by Section [66.007](#), Parks and Wildlife Code.

(d) The Parks and Wildlife Department shall enforce the rules adopted under this section.

Added by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 637, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.
Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 491, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Sec. 134.021. FEDERAL GRANTS. Federal grants for research and development of commercial fisheries may be used for individual aquaculture projects.

Acts 1975, 64th Leg., ch. 545, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1975.
Renumbered from Parks & Wildlife Code, Sec. 48.011 and amended by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 637, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 491, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Sec. 134.022. AQUACULTURE FACILITY PROTECTED. (a) A person, other than the owner or operator of an aquaculture facility, may not fish on an aquaculture facility without the consent of the owner or operator.

(b) A person may not unlawfully, as defined by Section [31.03](#)(b), Penal Code, acquire or otherwise exercise control over cultured species with intent to deprive the owner of the cultured species.

Renumbered from Parks & Wildlife Code, Sec. 48.013 and amended by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 637, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 491, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Sec. 134.023. PENALTIES. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), (c), or (d) of this section, a person who violates any provision of this chapter or rule adopted under this chapter commits an offense that is a Class C misdemeanor.

(b) A person who violates Section 134.020 commits an offense that is a Class B misdemeanor.

(c) A person who violates Section 134.022(b) of this code by taking cultured species of a value of \$200 or more but less than \$750 commits an offense that is a Class A misdemeanor.

(d) A person who violates Section 134.022(b) of this code by taking cultured species of a value of \$750 or more commits an offense that is a felony of the third degree.

Added by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 637, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 491, Sec. 11, eff. Sept. 1, 1991; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1239, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 848 (S.B. 703), Sec. 34, eff. September 1, 2021.

SUBCHAPTER C. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Sec. 134.031. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING. (a) The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Parks and Wildlife Department shall enter into a memorandum of understanding for the regulation of matters related to aquaculture.

(b) The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, after receiving an application for a wastewater discharge authorization from an aquaculture facility, shall provide a copy of the application to the Parks and Wildlife Department.

(c) The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the Parks and Wildlife Department shall ensure that the proposed discharge will not adversely affect a bay, an estuary, or other waters in the state.

(d) The Parks and Wildlife Department, in consultation with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, may establish general guidelines that identify sensitive aquatic habitat within

the coastal zone. The general guidelines must include factors such as the presence of sea grass beds, depth of receiving waters, and amount of tidal exchange.

(e) If the Parks and Wildlife Department establishes the guidelines described in Subsection (d), the Parks and Wildlife Department must provide the guidelines to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

(f) If the Parks and Wildlife Department has established the guidelines described in Subsection (d), the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality must consider the guidelines when reviewing wastewater discharge authorization applications for new aquaculture facilities located within the coastal zone, or expansion of existing facilities located within the coastal zone if the expansion will increase the amount of discharge, or change the nature of the discharge, above levels allowed by the wastewater discharge permit.

(g) In developing the guidelines under Subsection (d) applicable to aquaculture facilities engaged in the production of shrimp in the coastal zone, the Parks and Wildlife Department, in consultation with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, shall consider the best management practices that the facilities developed under the direction of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

(h) In the development of siting guidelines for aquaculture facilities engaged in the production of shrimp in the coastal zone, the best management practices developed by the facilities shall be considered.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1239, Sec. 6, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 848 (S.B. [703](#)), Sec. 35, eff. September 1, 2021.