



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
FISHING AND BOATING SERVICES  
AQUACULTURE AND INDUSTRY ENHANCEMENT DIVISION

## FARM-RAISED SHELLFISH TAGGING FACT SHEET

- The tagging program assures that the State of Maryland is in compliance with the federal requirements of the Food and Drug Administration's National Shellfish Sanitation Program by providing identification and traceability of shellfish harvested from shellfish aquaculture leases and the public fishery.
- Tagging regulations require anyone harvesting shellfish from a lease to complete and affix a Farm-Raised Shellfish tag to **each** container of shellfish, or shellfish stored in bulk, before leaving the leased area from which the shellfish are harvested.
- In 2014, the department adopted regulations to allow harvesters that are also certified by the Maryland Department of Health to utilize a dealer tag that meets the requirements stipulated in the National Shellfish Sanitation Program Model Ordinance, in lieu of a department-issued harvester tag.
- Shellfish tagging is the industry standard nationwide. Keeping our state in compliance with the tagging program guidelines builds consumer confidence that Maryland shellfish are safe, certified, and healthy.
- Tags must remain affixed to the containers until the product is in the possession of a Department of Health certified shellfish dealer.
- Farm-Raised Shellfish tags are issued to leaseholders by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and may not be transferred or reused. Because they are not dated, tags obtained in prior years may be used in 2024. Prior to any harvest activity in 2024, leaseholders should ensure that they have a sufficient supply of tags on hand. A leaseholder in good standing may obtain additional tags as needed by contacting Kellie Dennis at [Kellie.Dennis@maryland.gov](mailto:Kellie.Dennis@maryland.gov).
- **A harvester may not be in possession of wild shellfish tags and farm-raised shellfish tags on a harvesting vessel at the same time.**
- Failure to comply with the state's tagging requirements can result in civil and/or criminal penalties, including the suspension or revocation of a leaseholder's Shellfish Aquaculture Harvester Permit and/or Registration Cards associated with the lease.