

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2012 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Agriculture

CS/CS/HB 7021 — Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

by State Affairs Committee; Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee; Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee; Rep. Crisafulli and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 1254 by General Government Appropriations Committee; Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee; Agriculture Committee and Senator Siplin)

This bill addresses a number of issues relating to agriculture and certain powers and duties of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS). The bill provides for the following:

- Establishes the Division of Food, Nutrition and Wellness;
- Designates DACS, rather than the Department of Environmental Protection, as the staff responsible for acquiring and administering certain conservation easements;
- Extends the due date from September 15 to September 30 for mosquito control districts to provide their certified budgets to DACS;
- Allows water hyacinths produced by certified aquaculture producers to be exported to domestic, as well as foreign markets;
- Repeals statutory language relating to the John A. Mulrennan, Sr. Arthropod Research Laboratory;
- Allows DACS to adopt the most current federal regulations concerning food safety;
- Eliminates the Food Safety Pilot Program, relating to inspection of food establishments and vehicles;
- Provides direct statutory authority to DACS to distribute grants funds to farmers;
- Updates the name of the Office of Energy and Water to the Office of Agricultural Water Policy;
- Specifies that members of certain committees, boards, councils, working groups, task forces or other advisory bodies created within DACS are not entitled to per diem or travel expenses;
- Repeals the statute relating to the Florida Agricultural Exposition which was closed in 2008;
- Eliminates three technical councils and replaces them with a new Agricultural Feed, Seed and Fertilizer Advisory Council;
- Requires a review of marketing orders when requested by an advisory council rather than an annual audit by a certified public accountant;
- Revises the fertilizer tonnage fee program;
- Requires companies distributing feed in the state to report the number of tons distributed to DACS on a quarterly basis, specifies penalties for failure to comply, and specifies that consumers who purchase commercial feed that is in violation of state standards may seek legal or administrative action to recover penalties;
- Allows soil and water conservation districts to work across district lines in order to maximize the utilization of water conservation devices, systems, and techniques;
- Repeals provisions relating to cattle vaccination for brucellosis;

- Renames the “Wounded Warrior Special Hunt Area” as the “Operation Outdoor Freedom Special Hunt Area;”
- Gives the Florida Forest Service the sole authority to authorize silviculture and agricultural open burning to eliminate duplicative permitting;
- Provides an education fee waiver for elementary, middle, high school, and vocational schools that participate in the aquaculture certification program;
- Eliminates the Aquaculture Interagency Coordinating Council; and
- Authorizes the Commissioner of Agriculture to act as trustee on bonds posted with the United States Department of Agriculture in compliance with the Packers and Stockyards Act.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2012.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 115-0