

New environment-friendly technology. *Mudcrab culture in pens in mangrove areas has proven to be quite profitable. At the same time, this system keeps the mangrove areas intact. The mangrove area is an important support system for aquaculture because most economically important fishes, shrimps, mollusks, and crustaceans nurse their young or feed in the area. Once grown, most move on to the sea to spawn, hence, providing seed for aquaculture*

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Requirements for fishpond lease: things you need to know and do*

By **RIY Adan**

Planning to venture into aquaculture? Here are the things you need to know and do to start the operation.

Lands are classified into: the titled or private land and the government-owned land. If the area you are eyeing to use is a titled land, then there is no problem. You can now start with your fishpond operation, just make sure you obtain a business permit. This also holds true with other similar aquaculture structures such as floating cages and small farm reservoirs. Technical assistance can be sought from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and other fisheries agencies.

On the other hand, government-owned land is another story. It is governed by the Fishpond Lease Agreement (FLA), a 25-year contract. If after five years you were not able to develop the area, your lease will be cancelled. The area will then be made available to others who are interested or willing to develop it. Actually since 1992, BFAR has not been accepting FLA applications for new areas and especially those areas covered with mangroves. **Only existing areas with FLA permits either cancelled or forfeited are open for lease.** This is to curb the increase in

environmental exploitation. The government wants to retain and restore what is left of the country's once rich resources. Besides, the number of fishponds operating in the country is already enough to provide for the needs of the people, if and only if this is well developed.

The following are the things you need to comply with before you will be granted FLA:

Requirements in filing (new applicants)

- 1 Duly accomplished fishpond application form
- 2 Fishpond application fee of P1,000
- 3 Bank certification that the applicant has deposited an amount of P10, 000.00 per hectare for fishpond development
- 4 Affidavit of the applicant that the amount deposited in the bank will be used in the development of the area
- 5 Sixteen sets of initial environmental examination report
- 6 Survey plan of the area by a licensed geodetic engineer
- 7 Certification from the DENR that the area applied for is within the alienable and disposable area for fishpond development

*Interview with Dr. Sonia Seville, BFAR 6 Regional Director

⇒ next page



A typical fishpond in the Philippines; this one raises milkfish

- 8 Certification or resolution from the *Sangguniang Bayan* which states that municipality does not interpose in the development of the area applied for into fishpond

Requirements for FLA conversion, transfer and renewal

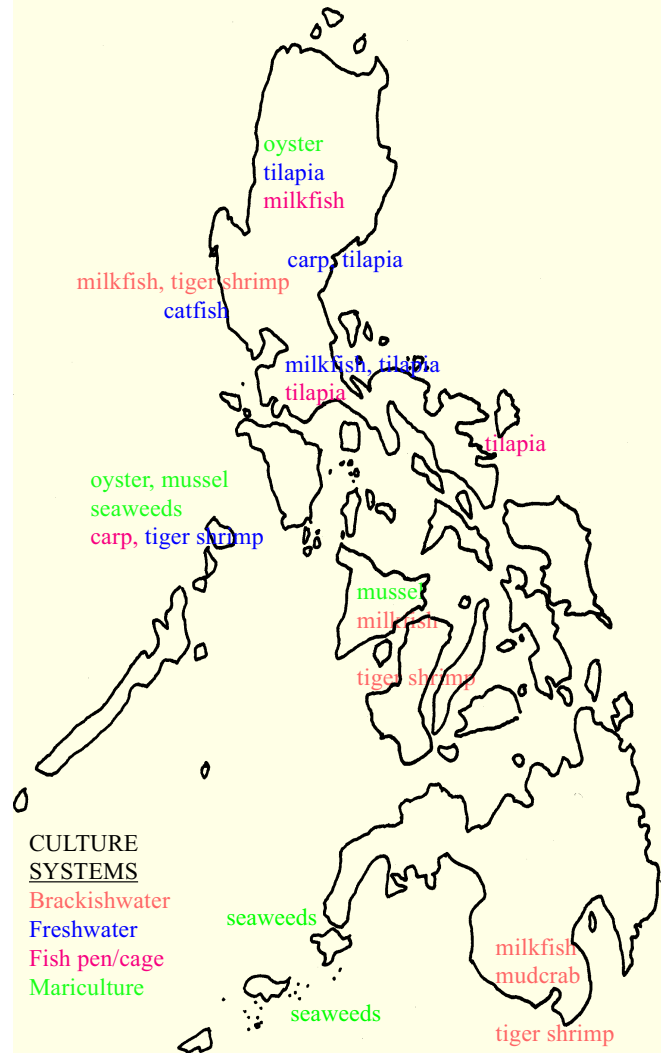
- 1 Twelve copies of approved survey plan
- 2 Twelve copies of FLA contract forms duly accomplished and notarized
- 3 Updated rentals
- 4 Cash bond deposit of P100 per hectare or fraction thereof
- 5 Certification from the Clerk of Court that the area is not subject to any judicial proceedings
- 6 Certification of the application that the area will not be subleased in the future
- 7 Certification from the BFAR Regional Director that the area is not subleased and not involved in any administrative case
- 8 Minutes of investigation
- 9 Recent improvement report
- 10 Updated semi-annual report
- 11 Certification fee of P4 (if transfer), a Transfer fee of not less than P10 but not more than P50

Fishpond rentals are now P500 ha per year – this rate will be increased to P1000 within five years.

To hasten application, it is advised that you apply personally. Make sure that the land you are applying is clear from any occupants or any court cases to avoid conflicts. You can apply at the nearest BFAR Provincial or Regional office. Call or write BFAR if you want to clarify things first.

Application is actually a breeze. It will be approved in a month or two so long as you have complied with all the requirements. ###

Choice spots



Aquaculture is the leading fish producing sector in the Philippines, contributing 34% to total fish production in 1998. Southern Tagalog region and the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao surpassed other regions with its extensive production of milkfish and tilapia, and seaweeds, respectively.

Major species cultured in the country includes: seaweeds (68%), milkfish (16%), tilapia (8%), shrimps or prawn (4%) and others (4%). Only the top two commodities in each culture system and in each region are reflected in the above map.

DATA FROM 1998 PHILIPPINE FISHERIES PROFILE, DA-BFAR