

NATIONAL SHELLFISH SANITATION PROGRAM

(Cooperative State-PHS-Industry Program for the Certification of Interstate Shellfish Shippers)

PART I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

1. Objectives

To prevent the transmission of disease by oysters, clams, and mussels and thereby to permit the continued use of a valuable, renewable, widely distributed natural resource.

2. Operation

The program is based on cooperative agreements between the Public Health Service, other interested Federal agencies, the States, and the shellfish industry. International agreements have been negotiated with Canada and Japan to assure the quality of shellfish imports from these two countries.

Public Health Service is responsible for the development of uniform standards, the training of State and industry personnel in new techniques, research necessary for the development and maintenance of effective standards, continuing technical audit of State programs, and publication of a semimonthly listing of State-certified shellfish shippers.

States are responsible for the adoption of laws or regulations based on recommended uniform standards; for the sanitary evaluation of growing areas; for the prevention of illegal harvesting of polluted or toxic shellfish from unacceptable areas; and the sanitary inspections of all elements of the growing, harvesting, processing, and the distribution of shellfish. (Program standards are outlined in National Shellfish Sanitation Program Manual of Operations, published by PHS.)

3. History

The program was established in 1925 by joint action of the States, Public Health Service, other interested Federal agencies, and the shellfish industry. This action followed a major typhoid epidemic attributed to oysters, and it was one which had a disastrous economic impact on the shellfish industry. Administrative and technical elements are subject to continuing technical review and revision through the mechanism of regional meetings and national shellfish sanitation workshops. The most recent workshop was held in 1965. (Copies of the proceedings of the workshop are published.)

4. Level of operations. (See table 1.)

Program: Food protective activities—National shellfish sanitation program.
Department or agency, and office or bureau: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; Public Health Service; Bureau of State Services (Environmental Health).