GUIDELINE ON THE PRODUCTION, HARVESTING, HANDLING AND TRANSPORTATION OF SHELLFISH FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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Pursuant to Section 60 of RA 8435 and Section 65 (s) of RA 8550, this guideline on the production, handling, transportation and packaging of shellfish is hereby issued for the information and guidance of local governments:

SECTION 1. Definition. — The term as used in this Order shall be construed as follows:

- Auxiliary invoice — An official document accompanying the shipment of shellfish issued by the duly authorized representative of the municipal or city government from its point of origin to its final destination in the country and/or export purposes, its quantity and estimated value if sold, the fee paid therefor and who received the payment, including the serial number of the official receipt used, to monitor the movement of shellfish in the country.

- Growing area — An area in the sea, estuarine or lagoon containing a natural species of shellfish; a site for the culture of shellfish.

- Shellfish — All species of univalves and bivalves which are filter feeders such as lamillibranch mollusks and gastrophods.

- Shucking — Removal of the meat from its shell.

SEC. 2. Choice of site for shellfish culture

- The site shall be situated near rivermouths shielded by rocks and trees, free from strong currents and rich in zoo and phytoplankton.

- The sea bottom shall be muddy or sandy substrates having a natural population of sponges and barnacles.

- The depth shall be 3 to 4 meters for mussels, and ½ to 3 meters for oysters using the pole or stake method. For floating raft it shall be from 8 to 10 meters deep with adequate tidal exchange

- The water salinity shall be from 27 to 35 ppt. for mussels, and 17 to 26 ppt. for oyster. The water temperature shall range from 26 to 28 degrees Celsius.

- A sanitary survey of growing areas shall be conducted to evaluate environmental facts such as —

1) Potential pollution sources from domestic/land based and industrial waste discharges, septic tanks and other aquaculture activities;

2) Water quality based on bacteriological criteria for faecal Coliform, and other pathogens;

3) Meteorological and geographical evaluation such as salinity, depth, rainfall patterns and intensity and prevailing winds.

SEC. 3. Gathering of shellfish

- Shellfish shall be gathered only upon issuance of a certificate to harvest issued by the municipal or city fishery officer;

- The shellfish shall be thoroughly brushed, scrubbed and washed of mud and other tenacious dirt;

- The shellfish shall be kept away from excessive heat and transported immediately not later than 15 hours after harvest.

- Watercrafts used in gathering the shellfish shall be cleaned to prevent contamination from pathogenic organisms;

- The shellfish shall be protected from any contamination, i.e, diesel, lubricants, gas, or oil, and

- Methods destructive to shellfish shall not be employed in gathering the same.

SECTION 4. Handling, transporting and packaging the shellfish

- Personnel with cuts, open wounds or suffering from communicable diseases shall not be allowed to handle the shellfish;

- The shellfish shall be packed in clean packaging material; the live shellfish in clean sacks, bamboo baskets (or kaing), bayong and crates, while its meat (cooked or raw) in PE bags, styrophore and polystyrene boxes;

- Shell meat for transport shall be packed in plastics bags to avoid direct contact with ice and maintained at temperatures of 4 degrees to 0 degree Celsius;

- The amount of ice packing shall depend on the length of time required for the shipment to reach its destination, the temperature maintained at 5 degrees Celsius; and

- The shipment of shellfish shall always be accompanied by an auxiliary invoice issued from its point of origin.

SEC. 5. Health control and monitoring. — Health control and monitoring shall be conducted periodically by BFAR, to include:

- Monitoring of all growing areas in coordination with the municipal or city government shall be conducted at regular intervals for microbiological test of water and the shell meat;

- Verification of the implementation of issuance of the auxiliary invoice in transporting shellfish; and

- Checking on the handling and transport of shellfish from the harvest area to the pre-processing or processing plant during on-site verification.

SEC. 6. Local legislation. — Ordinances shall be promulgated by the local governments penalizing the following:

- The taking, gathering, or harvesting of shellfish from waters placed under ban by the National Red Tide Task Force or Red Tide Testing Centers, for which no certificate to harvest shall be issued by the local government official concerned;

- Issuance of auxiliary invoice for shellfish nevertheless gathered sans the certificate to harvest issued therefor;

- Transporting shellfish without proper auxiliary invoice issued from its point of origin;

- Gathering shellfish or the spat thereof from “dirty” waters (with history of red tide occurrence) for seeding of “clean” waters (with no history of red tide occurrence).

SECTION 7. Effectivity. — This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official

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Gazette and/or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation and fifteen (15) days after registration with the Office of the National Administrative Register.

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