



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH APPROVES NEW PERMIT FOR
LOCAL SHELLFISH FARM**
KAUAI COMPANY FIRST TO RECEIVE STATE APPROVAL IN 26 YEARS

HONOLULU -- The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) has approved the growing waters and sale of molluscan shellfish by Sunrise Capitol Inc., dba Kauai Clams. The company is located in Kekaha on Kauai, and is the first operation in the state in 26 years to receive approval by DOH to farm and sell shellfish. The company is growing clams at present.

“Governor Abercrombie asked the department to help bring a thriving shellfish industry back to Hawaii, and our laboratory and food safety staff worked hard to get the federal certification required to allow Hawaii businesses to raise clams and oysters for sale,” said Gary Gill, DOH deputy director of environmental health. “We will continue to do our part to promote food sustainability and economic development while we ensure the safety of Hawaii food products.”

The last shellfish operation in the state was Hawaiian Seafood Gardens, which closed in 1997 for financial reasons. After its closure, local interest in shellfish farming seemed to disappear, and DOH allowed its U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) laboratory certification to lapse in 2000. In recent years, local interest to revive shellfish production gained momentum, and the DOH Food Safety Program, State Laboratories Division, and the fledgling shellfish industry undertook rigorous measures to bring the sanitary shellfish permit program in Hawaii back to life.

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The raising and sale of shellfish requires strict state and federal regulatory requirements to ensure food safety and prevent serious food borne illness. Over 16 months, DOH laboratory and food safety programs underwent intense evaluation and training by the U.S. FDA to receive federal certification and ensure industry compliance to meet safety standards.

“Having locally-grown products is always a great benefit for both consumers and businesses,” said Mike Turner of Kauai Clams. “We are excited about the future of our new product Kauai clams, and soon will introduce locally-grown oysters into our product line. Our initial sales will be here on Kauai and, with time, we anticipate distribution to be statewide as we increase production at our facility.”

Two other shellfish operations have applied with the DOH for permits: Paepae O Heeia, located in Heeia Kea, and Molii Ponds, owned by Kualoa Ranch Inc. Both of these sites are undergoing environmental surveys including examination of the growing waters for microbial contaminants to ensure safe water quality standards. Interested parties on Molokai and Hawaii Island may soon be added to the list of potential shellfish growers.

The Hawaii Department of Health protects and promotes the health of Hawaii residents and visitors through regulation of food establishments and products, laboratory testing, and education of food industry workers statewide. The department conducts routine inspections of facilities where food products are prepared, manufactured, distributed or sold; investigates possible food safety violations that may be the cause of food borne illnesses, and allegations of adulterated foods; and works with business owners, workers, and the food industry to ensure safe food preparation and sanitary conditions.

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