



The Shrimp e-Advocate

The Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA) is a non-profit alliance of members of the U.S. shrimp industry in eight states committed to preventing the continued deterioration of America's shrimp industry and to ensuring the industry's future viability. SSA serves as the national voice for the shrimp fishermen and processors in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas.

TAA News Alert

November 23, 2010

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Common Problems and Misunderstandings with the TAA Training Process for Shrimp Fishermen

Earlier this year, the Southern Shrimp Alliance successfully petitioned for shrimp harvested in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic to be considered an eligible commodity for the Trade Adjustment Assistance program in FY2010. In the months following certification, SSA worked closely with Sea Grant and USDA officials to ensure the individual eligibility of as many fishermen as possible. Ultimately, nearly 4,000 members of the industry from throughout the eight states applied to participate in the FY2010 TAA program and the vast majority of these applications have been approved by the USDA. Now it is up to those who have been accepted in the program to fully participate in and complete the TAA Training and Technical Assistance, as required by USDA. If the fishermen who have been approved complete the training, the total amount of financial assistance distributed to the shrimp industry could reach \$40 million - and SSA remains committed to aiding fishermen in completing the TAA training.

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It has come to our attention that there are a number of technicalities or misunderstandings that are making it difficult for some individuals in the shrimp industry to get their training done. This News Alert is meant to clear up some of those misunderstandings.

First let's clear up some misunderstandings or definitions.

There are 3 basic parts to the TAA Training: 1) Initial Orientation, 2) Intensive Training, and 3) the Long-Term Business Plan.

1) **Initial "Orientation" Training:** This is a brief overview of the program; first, it's an overview of the TAA program and the steps that must be completed by each approved applicant to complete the program and second, it's a discussion of what has happened to your industry and where the industry goes from here. It can be completed on-line OR in-person at one of the scheduled workshops that you can find times and locations for on the website: www.aaforfarmers.org . You do not need to do both. A person from one state can attend a workshop in another state but some workshops require YOU TO PRE-REGISTER in order to be guaranteed a seat. It takes 1-2 hours to complete the Initial Orientation on-line and we have heard from many people who were not familiar with computers that this was very easy and convenient. No pre-registration is required, no meeting, no traveling. Get on-line anytime, create an account (or log-in if you already have an account), read the information and answer some questions. Done.

IMPORTANT: This brief Initial Orientation must be completed by December 22, 2010 or you will no longer be eligible. This section should not be confused with the Intensive Training which requires 12 hours of

training in specific subject areas such as Handling the Catch, Marketing, etc.

2) **Intensive Training**: This is the true Training section of this program. There are several subjects that you will be able to choose from that will specifically apply to you, your business or your industry. Each subject will be worth from 1-5 hours worth of credit (most will be worth 3 hours). Many of these courses will be available on-line, but you MAY complete some of this section on-line AND some during a workshop in-person, or you can do it all in workshops if you can find workshop meetings that you can attend and can get a seat in the meeting. The on-line courses will not be available until mid-January 2011, but some of these hours may be completed before then via in-person workshop classes as shown in the schedule that can be found at: www.taaforfarmers.org . Again, you MUST pre-register for many of these workshops to guarantee a seat. IT IS **NOT** REQUIRED THAT **INTENSIVE TRAINING** BE COMPLETED BY DECEMBER 22, 2010. The December 22 deadline ONLY applies to the brief Initial Orientation. At the end of the Intensive Training portion of the program (when you've completed the required 12 hours) you will have completed an "Initial Business Plan" (basically a 1-2 page form/short-term business plan) and then you may file for the first part of the TAA funds (up to \$4,000).

3) **Long Term Business Adjustment Plan**: This part of the training will most likely not be started until around March of 2011. In this section, you must meet with a business planner a couple of times and he will help you develop a long-term business plan. When this is completed, you may file for the second portion of TAA funds (up to \$8,000).

Other common problems or misunderstandings:

- Any and all name changes/corrections or adding/changing a designated alternate **MUST** occur at the FSA office where they signed up.
- Your TAA ID (identification number) is **NOT** used when registering for an online account at www.TAAforFarmers.org . You must use your Tax ID number or SSN (whichever you used on your application) to gain access to the online process and information.
- If you have any questions about **ANYTHING** TAA related, they should feel free to call the Southern Risk Management Education Center, Phone: (501) 671-2166.
- If you have tried to access the www.TAAforFarmers.org website to register for an account and have been denied access, you should call the Center for Farm Financial Management, Phone: (612) 625-1964.
- **IMPORTANT**: We want to stress that many fishermen have reported how easy it is to do the "Initial Orientation" Training **ON-LINE** and we suggest you try it. It is an easy way to do all the training. If you are not familiar with computers, try it the first time with someone who is good with computers sitting with you to help you.

There is another year for TAA: TAA FY2011. Do not confuse this year and its deadlines with TAA FY2010.

It is important to know that SSA has also successfully petitioned for shrimp to again be an eligible commodity for the **FY2011** TAA program. For those who are not already participating in the FY2010 TAA program, the **application deadline** for the FY2011 program is December 23, 2010. If you have already been approved for TAA FY2010, you can not apply for TAA FY2011 using the same business. Every shrimper who thinks that he or she can benefit from the TAA program is encouraged to apply.

Please feel free to contact the SSA office if you have any questions or contact the designers of the training process and the TAA program itself at the numbers above, depending on your question.