

RCW 15.85.070 Integrated pest management research program.

(Expires July 1, 2035.) (1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department of agriculture shall administer an integrated pest management research program that focuses on addressing the impacts of burrowing shrimp on bottom culture shellfish farming. The program must work towards the following objectives:

(a) Support and recommend funding for research efforts focused on enhancing the resilience and productivity of shellfish farming and the marine ecosystem in the face of burrowing shrimp infestations;

(b) Facilitate and enhance collaboration between researchers, shellfish farmers, regulatory agencies, and relevant stakeholders to ensure permanent, practical, and effective solutions.

(2) To accomplish its objectives, the program must do the following:

(a) Solicit researchers with expertise in marine biology, agriculture, ecology, engineering, and related fields to submit proposals for burrowing shrimp control research projects;

(b) Identify and provide ground for controlled research that explores diverse control methods;

(c) Identify funding mechanisms for future equipment needs based on tool and technology development;

(d) Provide permitting assistance for shellfish growers to use identified control methods.

(3) The governing board created in RCW 15.85.080 is responsible for reviewing research proposals, ensuring transparency and accountability in implementing the program, and guiding the department of agriculture on the expenditure of research grant funds.

(4) Research expenditures may only be spent on projects that support control of burrowing shrimp in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor. Any control method that has been demonstrated as ineffective in past studies is not eligible for funding.

(5) This section expires July 1, 2035. [2025 c 87 s 2.]

Findings—Intent—2025 c 87: "(1) The legislature finds that in 2014, shellfish growers were dealt a significant setback when they lost their primary tool for controlling burrowing shrimp infestations in coastal estuaries. Burrowing shrimp in high densities pose a significant threat to shellfish farming operations and the surrounding aquatic ecosystem, causing damage to shellfish growing areas, negatively impacting productivity, and eliminating the growth of native eelgrass which provides essential habitat for salmonids and Dungeness crab, among other species.

(2) In addition, the legislature finds that since 1963, a control method developed in collaboration with the Washington state department of fish and wildlife had been effectively utilized. However, the phased-out use of carbaryl and the denial of a permit to use imidacloprid by the Washington state department of ecology left growers without crucial pest control measures. Burrowing shrimp infestations on shellfish grounds has led to a reduction in growing operations due to the absence of an effective control tool, and despite persistent efforts a viable alternative remains elusive.

(3) To address this ongoing crisis, the legislature intends to continue the current collaboration and research efforts and create a program within the Washington state department of agriculture to

coordinate research into new and innovative control methods for burrowing shrimp infestations.

(4) This section expires July 1, 2035." [2025 c 87 s 1.]