

The advent of molecular methods for assessing genetic interaction between wild and introduced domesticated stocks should allow more detailed analysis of genetic impacts and there are now many examples of the power of this kind of study outside of the region. Breeding wild caught broodstock from the same population or releasing sterile fish are options that should be actively considered under the precautionary principle although the latter option of sterile fish could still have impacts on reproduction or ecological displacement of wild stocks. The panel went as far as to recommend that broodstock should be developed and maintained separately for aquaculture and for stock enhancement, with the former being genetically improved for enhanced efficiency while management of the latter stocks should strive to minimize genetic change. Whilst there is little doubt that such a recommendation is idealistically sound, there are clearly many logistical constraints to adopting such a recommendation.

My initial fear was that the panel sessions at the ASEAN-SEAFDEC meeting may simply echo many of the points raised at the earlier NACA-FAO sponsored conference on Aquaculture in the Third Millennium that then appeared in the Bangkok declaration. However, for me, the focus on seed supply issues rather than just genetics, ensured that original discussion was stimulated and I found some of my own views somewhat modified by the discussion, particularly with regard to the relative roles of centralized and decentralized seed supply systems.



Silver barb, Barbodes gonionotus, is a species in which natural population structure has been compromised by the widespread stocking of hatchery-produced seed in enhanced fisheries.



These fish were produced by a subsistence farmer in Nakhon Sawan, Thailand [and they tasted great! Ed.]

Domestication gets the thumbs up



Following shortages of wild broodstock, Australian industry is now investing in domestication programmes. This is a broodstock rearing facility at a farm near the Gold Coast.

The Australian Fisheries Research & Development Corporation (FRDC) has approved an application by the Australian Prawn Farmers Association (APFA) to remove barriers to domestication of Black Tiger Prawn *Penaeus monodon*. The AUD\$ 1.8 million, 3-year project is a collaborative partnership between the FRDC, the Australian Institute of Marine Science, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), Queensland's Agency for Food and Fibre Sciences and three leading Australian prawn farms.

Details are still being finalized however an early start to the project has been granted with broodstock collection hopefully to get underway this month.

According to APFA domestication has been the number one industry R&D priority for several years and is of international importance. Details of the project will be announced at the upcoming APFA Annual Conference in Sydney in July. *For more information contact Martin Breen, Executive Officer of the Australian Prawn Farmers' Association, Email apfa@qff.org.au.*