



**Aquaculture Asia**  
is an autonomous publication  
that gives people in developing  
countries a voice. The views and  
opinions expressed herein are  
those of the contributors and  
do not represent the policies or  
position of NACA.

**Editorial Board**  
Wing-Keong Ng  
M.C. Nandeesh

**Editor**  
Simon Wilkinson  
simon@enaca.org

**NACA**  
An intergovernmental  
organization that promotes  
rural development through  
sustainable aquaculture. NACA  
seeks to improve rural income,  
increase food production and  
foreign exchange earnings and  
to diversify farm production. The  
ultimate beneficiaries of NACA  
activities are farmers and rural  
communities.

**Contact**  
The Editor, Aquaculture Asia  
PO Box 1040  
Kasetsart Post Office  
Bangkok 10903, Thailand  
Tel +66-2 561 1728  
Fax +66-2 561 1727  
Website <http://www.enaca.org>

Submit articles to:  
magazine@enaca.org

**Printed by**  
Scand-Media Co., Ltd.

# AQUACULTURE ASIA

**Volume XIV No. 1**  
**January-March 2009**

**ISSN 0859-600X**

## **The food and energy crisis: A taste of things to come**

Last year saw the climax of the world's most recent energy shock. The oil price climbed with alarming speed to a peak just shy of US\$150, nearly triple its January 2007 low of US\$55. This rapid increase in energy cost revealed two things: The limitations in global oil production capacity; and perhaps more alarmingly, the amount of fossil fuel energy in the human food chain. The higher energy costs resulted in significant increases in the cost of food across the board.

When supply cannot meet demand, prices rise, and those that can least afford to pay are priced out of the market. When the commodity in question is food, it is the poor that go hungry. The increasing food prices caused considerable alarm amongst governments and development agencies. In July 2008 the International Monetary Fund issued a warning that the increasing oil and food costs posed a threat to food security in many poor and developing countries.

The crisis was brought on by the increasing competition for limited oil resources, which has intensified as the standard of living has risen in many parts of the developing world, and as developing economies continue to industrialise. In particular, the rapid growth of the titanic Chinese and Indian economies has contributed to a spike in global energy demand.

The energy crisis put food security firmly back on the agenda. The point is that we need to keep it there. The present global economic downturn has granted the world a temporary reprieve, but once economies begin to recover, prices will once again soar. We should learn from this brief vision of the future and take steps to avoid a repeat episode.

For many years the aquaculture industry has been moving towards increasing culture of 'high value' and typically carnivorous aquaculture species, i.e. high priced luxuries for wealthy consumers. Low cost species by contrast haven't got nearly as much attention in the press, although they are considerably more important from a food security point of view in that they are more affordable, are less energy and resource intensive (being predominantly herbivorous or otherwise low in the food chain) and comprise the clear majority of global aquaculture production.

It's fair to say that low-cost species haven't received the attention they deserved, and perhaps they should. With this in mind, NACA and FAO will convene a workshop on 'Market chains and issues associated with biosecurity of low-valued cultured commodities in Asia', in Siam Reap, Cambodia, 23-26 February 2009. Further details about the workshop, as well as the report and issues raised, will be made available on the Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture section of the NACA website in due course.

*Simon Wilkinson*