

WHERE GOES ASIAN AQUACULTURE?

FAO and NACA meetings in Ramsar yield broad guidelines for moving Asian aquaculture forward



Two consecutive regional meetings held recently in the historic Caspian coastal town of Ramsar in Iran have provided yet another significant body of information to guide the development of aquaculture in the Asian region. The first, held on 27-29 September was the FAO Expert Workshop to Review the Status and Prospective Development of Aquaculture in Asia. The second was the Eighth Meeting of NACA's Technical Advisory Committee. Both meetings were chaired by Mr Ebrahim Maygoli, I.R. Iran's representative to the NACA Governing Council.



Iranian fisheries development and research officers participated in force and contributed actively in both meetings. Speaking is Mr Hosseini, Aquaculture Deputy of Iranian Fisheries Organization, to his right is Dr Muhammad Pourkazemi, Director of the International Sturgeon Research Institute and Asia's representative to CITES.

Where goes Asian aquaculture? The FAO Expert Workshop was attended by about 50 aquaculture research, information, training and policy officers from 16 countries in South, East and Southeast Asia, and from Iran and the Republic of Georgia, as well as a senior aquaculture adviser of the Pacific Island Nations, and several institutions including NACA, FAO, SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. The workshop tried to describe ‘where Asian aquaculture is heading’ by reviewing past developments, trends, current status and emerging issues in aquaculture development in the region. From this exercise, it identified six major trends:

1. Increasing intensification driven by restrictions on and limits to aquaculture expansion
2. Continued diversification of species and the need for their responsible use
3. Continued diversification of production systems
4. Increasing influence of markets, trade and consumption patterns
5. Enhanced regulation and better governance
6. Drive for better management



A discussion group takes a reluctant break for a photo opportunity, on the photographer's promise of having the photo placed in Aquaculture Asia. Intensive working group discussions marked the conduct of both meetings

The good and the bad The good and less good sides of each trend were described and ways to enhance the good and prevent or mitigate the less good were suggested. A strategy, notable for being recurrently mentioned as one that would enhance or mitigate impacts of each of the six trends was the formation or strengthening of Farmers' Organizations. Another was proper development planning, which the workshop stressed would be considerably facilitated by reliable and current information on a number of indicators of aquaculture's contribution to equitable social and economic development. These might include employment opportunities and ways that enhance the livelihoods of

people who are poor, human development such as to health and nutrition, and net contribution to national wealth.



Officers of (left to right) NACA, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and FAO's Inland Waters and Aquaculture Services (FIRI) review a working groups' conclusions.

Sources The workshop discussions that led to these conclusions were informed by several reviews, particularly the Regional Review of Status and Trends, which was the synthesis of national status reviews (written by national experts in 18 countries and national aquaculture information from two others), the NACA/FAO review of emerging trends and experiences in Asia-Pacific published in 2004, FAO's State of World Aquaculture publication, the technical report of the NACA/FAO Aquaculture Conference in the Third Millennium, and other recent and current technical publications.



The FAO team of Jia Jiansan, Simon FungeSmith and Rohana Subasinghe moderating the plenary

Lead-up to 3rd COFI-SCA Meeting. The workshop is one of a number of regional reviews that have been conducted by FAO recently. These will be synthesized into a global status and trends overview and a prospective review of global aquaculture development to inform the decisions of the third meeting of the Sub-Committee on Aquaculture of the Committee on Fisheries that meets in September 2006 in New Delhi. The workshop report will be made available for public comments. Contact Dr. Rohana Subasinghe (rohana.subasinghe@fao.org) for inquiries.

Second Regional Aquaculture Work Program of the Decade. The other meeting, on 1-3 October, was the Eighth Technical Advisory Committee Meeting of NACA, or TAC-8.



A trout farm high on the hills near Ramsar. Iran's trout farmers produced 24000 tons last year. One of them, Mr Kazemi (centre) owner of the above farm, tells Iranian fisheries officers and Mr Chen Foo Yan, former NACA Coordinator and CTA of an FAO Research and Training project in Iran in 1992-94, trout farmers' problems and aspirations.



It involved most of the participants of the preceding FAO workshop, who are mostly members of the Technical Advisory Committee of NACA. Its purpose was to lay down the technical basis for the next Work Program for Aquaculture Development in the Asia-Pacific covering the period 2006-2010. A review of the achievements of the past five years pointed to the need for re-focusing the program from its current theme of aquaculture for rural development to “empowering and getting the farmer to stay in business and being justifiably rewarded for doing so”. This was largely prompted by the encouraging results of a number of collaborative field projects of NACA (with FAO and national, regional and international cooperating organizations) where farmers and fishers form Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Federations of SHGs or are organized into clubs or clusters. This in places has led to the development of local institutions like One-stop Aqua Shops, which help farmers and fishers to draw down the services they need and support them to better transact with other players in the market chain, adopt Better Management Practices and Better-Practice Guidelines. This in turn leading to higher yields and returns and better quality products, enjoying rarer incidence of diseases on-farms while causing less disturbance to the environment.

Looking at sturgeons under culture at the International Sturgeon Research Institute





**FAO's Regional Aquaculture Officer for
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Organized groups of (small-scale shrimp) farmers adopting BMPs have achieved measurable results in better yields and higher returns, cleaner products, rarer occurrence of disease, and less environmental impacts. Federated Self-Help Groups of small-scale carp farmers have had *a voice* in policy and legal changes, developed local institutions where Better Practice Guidelines are stimulating large increases in local fish production from remote rural communities, which are also becoming involved in monitoring and evaluation of service provision.

The draft report of the 8th TAC Meeting will be made available shortly. Meanwhile a broad review of the impacts of the current 5-year Work Program, which also argues for a farmer focus in the Work Program, is available on ([this link](#)).
