



AQD Matters

Newsletter of the SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department (AQD), Tigbauan, Iloilo, Philippines

AQD and Hokudai highlight exchange programs for young researchers

On the first of December, AQD and Hokkaido University in Japan (Hokudai) highlighted the exchange programs for young researchers through an international seminar held at AQD's main station in Iloilo. The seminar was the culminating activity of AASP (Asia-Africa Science Platform) program under JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) on environment-friendly aquaculture & stock enhancement.

Six presentations were made. Dr. Katsutoshi Arai of Hokkaido Univ gave an overview of AASP's international exchange programs and extended the invitation to AQD for more collaborative research work. He also presented a brief review of abalone genetics with special reference to hybridization, triploidization, and genetic mapping. Dr. Yasuaki Takagi, also from Hokudai, discussed the wise use of fisheries wastes to develop environment-friendly aquaculture.

Meanwhile, AQD associate scientists Dr. Frolan Aya and Dr. Ma. Michelle Peñaranda, and AQD technical assistant Ms. Ellen Grace Tisuela, reported their academic experiences. The work of Dr. Aya and Dr. Peñaranda was made under the *Advanced program to foster young and female researchers from Southeast Asia in sustainable fisheries* of JSPS while that of Ms. Tisuela was under the three-year research collaboration between AQD and Hokkaido Univ. Ms. Tisuela was the most recent to undergo training – on cytogenetic studies for hybridization and polyploidization of tropical abalones – under Prof. Dr. Arai from 3 to 27 October.

JSPS also sponsored two more AQD staff – biotech lab microscopist Mr. Norwell Brian Bautista and senior technical assistant Ms. Schedar Rose Novilla. Both studied at the University of Tsukuba from 15 September to 31 October as part of the JSPS Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange Students and Youths (JENESYS) program. Supervised by Dr. Nakao Nomura, Mr. Bautista learned SDS-PAGE, a protein analysis/profiling tool using *Artemia* as sample, while Ms. Novilla worked on the effect of environmental stress on the biochemical composition of *Artemia*.



Dr. Katsutoshi Arai of Hokkaido University speaks at the *International seminar on environment-friendly aquaculture & stock enhancement*, with colleague

Dr. Yasuaki Takagi checking out AQD's abalone hatchery, and both with AQD Deputy Chief Dr. Teruo Azuma



34th Meeting of the Program Committee of SEAFDEC and the 14th Meeting of the Fisheries Consultative Group / ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership (FCG-ASSP) held at the Heritage Hotel, Manila (above left; photo at right shows the participants' visit to a BFAR station).

AQD received commendations for its well-implemented commodity programs in 2011, while its thematic programs were endorsed for implementation beginning 2012. The meeting also suggested that AQD put further emphasis on the emerging needs of the aquaculture sector in Southeast Asia; and, depending on available resources, more (collaborative) technology transfer and impact assessments be made. Another matter discussed was the establishment of a new SEAFDEC Department – the Regional Center for Inland Fisheries Development — in Palembang, Indonesia as proposed by the Indonesian government during the ministerial session of the 2011 ASEAN-SEAFDEC conference. The new department is proposed to work on inland (freshwater) fisheries.

The back-to-back meetings were hosted by AQD and DA-BFAR (Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources) and chaired by the SEAFDEC Secretary-General Dr. Chumnarn Pongsri. — Story and photos by B Acosta

AQD and BFAR host program meetings

From 14 to 18 November 2011, an assembly of over 50 delegates from SEAFDEC's 11 member-countries and representatives from the FAO Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat, SEAFDEC Departments and Secretariat participated in the

FIRST COURSE OFFERING Training on info dissemination

AQD offered for the first time the course on *Capacity building on information dissemination and data management* from 12 to 22 December at AQD's main station in Iloilo.

Organized upon the request of the SEAFDEC Secretariat, the course was funded by GOJ-TF and was attended by six information officers from the Secretariat and TD in Thailand, MFRDMD in Malaysia, and AQD.

This course was meant to provide the participants with skills on information dissemination, development of institutional repositories, and online data management.

There were lectures on (1) organization-wide databases (ie. AQD's EISG or executive information support group databases) and institutional repositories; (2) web technologies & applications in libraries; (3) selective



Trainees visit AQD's fish cages and IRRI's information center; and pose with their mentors from AQD's Development Communication Section and Library & Databanking Services Section, and course officer from Training Section

dissemination of information, and subject analysis & use of controlled vocabulary; (4) writing / editing / designing publications; and (5) improving websites. Practical sessions on digitizing library materials, and writing news & online posting using WordPress

were likewise conducted. An integration workshop and visits to information centers -- International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Laguna and Bureau of Agricultural Statistics and UP Diliman Library in Quezon City -- capped the course.

Aquaculture for communities

Ten participants attended AQD's international training course on *Community-based freshwater aquaculture for remote rural areas of Southeast Asia*. Funded by GOJ-TF, it was conducted 22 November through 1 December at AQD's Iloilo station. The trainees were from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Spain, Thailand, and the Philippines.

About the course, Mr. Txomin Azpetia Badiola of Spain shared his thoughts:

AQD socioeconomic head Dr. Nerissa Salayo (3rd from left) discusses possible livelihood options in Dumarao, Capiz



"I have seen that having expert AQD lecturers enhances the learning very well. I also enjoyed the demos and field visits to AQD stations."



L-R: AQD researcher Ms. Didi Baticados leads the trainees in reviewing and clustering village problems based on a previously conducted focus group discussion; AQD technical assistant Mr. Gerald Gonzaga shows the trainees the operations of AQD's pilot feed mill; Ms. Pedrita Caballero gives a briefing on AQD's facilities in Dumangas station; the trainees present a song number at the course's closing ceremony

Words of gratitude from AQD's trainees

Even at the final stretch of the year, AQD has been receiving positive feedback from its training alumni.

“ Thank you very much. I used to remember the experience and good memories during the training in SEAFDEC. It was really helpful for my career and I learnt a lot from the teachers there. Now I also use this good chance to train my young staff. Your great help will also benefit a lot for them.”

Prof. Yuan Xinhua (PhD)
Deputy Director, Freshwater Fisheries Research Center
Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences
Asia-Pacific Regional Research and Training Center
for Integrated Fish Farming
(Email correspondence, 10 November)

“ During our participatory system assessment or analysis, we noticed that in the rural areas, the fisherfolk are the poorest among the interviewed participants of the community in Dumarao. With this, our gained technical know-how in aquaculture will be tested to lift up the living condition of the poorest among the poor – the fishers.”

Mr. Valentino Macasaet
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
(Class Chair's message at the closing of the training on *Community-based freshwater aquaculture for remote rural areas of Southeast Asia*, 01 December)

AQD teaches interns from China, Spain and Philippines

As part of a two-year collaboration between AQD and FFRC-CAFS (Freshwater Fisheries Research Center -Chinese Academy of Fishery Sciences), AQD arranged the internship of Mr. Ming Junchao in November through December. Mr. Ming studied freshwater aquaculture, among other disciplines.

Mr. Txomin Azpeitia Badiola of Spain, on the other hand, came to AQD to get a month-long hands-on experience in aquaculture production. He is a marine biologist particularly interested in aquaculture systems design & development, fish breeding & larviculture.

AQD also accepted interns from the veterinary medicine schools of Capiz State University and Aklan State University to engage in fish health laboratory work. The internship for students of Capiz State was 2-16 November; while for Aklan State, it started 24 October and will continue until 10 February 2012.

Finally, AQD hosted 9-11 November the study tour of the Northern Negros Aquatic Resource Management Advisory Council (NNARMAC). There were 37 participants from the local government units in northern Negros and other sectors. Lectures on mud crab, sandfish, abalone, stock enhancement, financial analysis, milkfish, and other high-value species were conducted. The participants also visited AQD's demonstration projects in Dumangas and Igang.



Mr. Junchao (top) of FFRC China interviews a community resident to make a 24-hour activity map, one of the tools in participatory rapid appraisal; while Mr. Badiola of Spain makes inquiries at AQD's Dumangas Brackishwater Station

Vet med students from Aklan and Capiz state universities learn new skills at AQD's fish health laboratory



Study tour participants from Negros observe abalone and seahorse production at AQD stations in Iloilo and Guimaras, respectively



AQD gives updates on grouper, agri-econ, and genomics

AQD Chief Dr. Joebert Toledo gave updates on grouper during the *International symposium on grouper culture* held 8-11 November in Pingtung, Taiwan. Dr. Toledo noted that research work on grouper has significantly improved production from the hatchery to grow-out but the industry's sustainability is threatened by viral disease outbreaks. He emphasized AQD's efforts in developing protective immunity in grouper against viral nervous necrosis (VNN) by vaccination.

Four AQD staff attended the 48th biennial convention of the Philippine Agricultural Economics and Development Association Inc. (PAEDA) held in Batac, Ilocos Norte 20-21 October. AQD scientist and socioeconomics head Dr. Nerissa Salayo chaired the session on fisheries; AQD senior technical assistant Ms. Dianne Hope Tormon presented some issues and challenges in



At the PAEDA convention are four AQD staff: Dr. ND Salayo, Ms. D Baticados, Ms. DH Tormon and Mr. N Opiña

promoting milkfish cage culture as a livelihood for capture fishers arising from her study; and technical assistant Mr. Noel Opiña presented results of his study done with co-workers B Juanga, J Ladja and FD Estepa on mudcrab fattening in mangroves using individual bamboo pens with the crabs fed trashfish. This gathered interest among participants. AQD researcher Ms. Didi Baticados also participated in the convention which focused on the challenges of enhancing the competitiveness of Philippine agriculture.

Moreover, AQD scientist Dr. Ma. Rowena Eguia represented AQD in the: (1) *Fisheries genomics workshop* on 11 November in Quezon City and (2) launching of the *Philippine Genome Center* on 28 November in Makati City. The former was meant to finalize the R&D roadmap for fisheries genomics where AQD expressed its interest in pursuing collaborative work on shrimp, milkfish, mud crab, and abalone genomics, and in augmenting AQD's molecular genetic marker research for selective breeding in penaeid shrimp and other priority species. At the PGC launching, on the other hand, the potential benefits and challenges in doing and seeking funds for genomics research were presented by its international scientific advisory board comprising renowned scientists and genome center administrators from The University of Hongkong, Genome Institute of Singapore, and New York University, to name a few.

AQD exhibits R&D work in two fairs

AQD's R&D work was promoted during the 1st *Regional organic agri research fair* held 14-18 November at Central Philippines University, Iloilo City and at the 4th *Pinoy aquatic fair & bazaar* held 2-4 December in Quezon City. The former aimed to expand the appreciation of organic agriculture in the Visayas; the latter was organized by the Agri-Aqua Network, Inc. in partnership with BFAR.

The organic agriculture fair in Iloilo



Spreading R&D thru mass media



View the Malaya articles at:
<http://www.malaya.com.ph/nov17/agri1.html>
<http://www.malaya.com.ph/nov17/agri2.html>
<http://www.malaya.com.ph/nov18/agri1.html>
<http://www.malaya.com.ph/nov18/agri2.html>

Amazing Planet crew films the abalone hatchery where AQD senior technical assistants Mr. Vincent Encena II and Mr. Nestor Bayona showed them the abalone "dormitory"-like compartment. The crew also explored the sandfish, mudcrab, milkfish facilities and FishWorld

It was abalone's turn to be featured in *Malaya Business Insight* with four articles written by editor Mr. Paul Icamina appearing in the 11 and 18 November issues. Previously, Mr. Icamina's write-ups covered AQD's seahorse hatchery and vaccine for VNN (viral nervous necrosis).

Meanwhile, the crew of *Amazing Planet Channel*, a travel-lifestyle cable TV channel whose broadcast reaches Panay and Negros islands filmed AQD facilities and conducted interviews at AQD's main station in Iloilo on 22 November. AQD will be featured in the travel segment of their Tigbauan episode.

AQD welcomes guests from PNG, ACIAR

On 22 November, government officials from Papua New Guinea (PNG) came to AQD to look for information about milkfish & tilapia and see the hatcheries. Mr. Michael Sapau, Governor of Manus Province in PNG, and his associate Mr. Bernard Moigah (top left) were accompanied by Mr. Jose Denis Cazeñas of DM Cazeñas Contractors Co. and Iloilo City Councilor Mr. Edward Yee.



On 29 November, Dr. Richard Knuckey and Prof. Abigail Elizur of ACIAR (Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research) in Australia came to tour AQD's sandfish hatchery-broodstock facilities and to discuss a new collaborative project with AQD.



Research seminars @AQD

Ms. Dianne Hope Tormon, AQD senior technical assistant, presented her study on *Issues and challenges in promoting milkfish cage culture as alternative livelihood for capture fishers affected by oil spill: Guimaras experience* on 3 November. Her work details AQD's evaluation of the opportunities provided to four coastal barangays in Nueva Valencia, Guimaras, one of the sites of AQD's *Institutional capacity development for sustainable aquaculture* (ICDSA) project.

From season-long training and technology demonstration, to expert-guided cage culture trials at AQD's Igang Marine Station, Ms. Tormon noted the viability of this techno-transfer scheme but found later that allowing the fish farmers to manage their own cages (transferred from AQD's mariculture park to community waters) was most challenging. Meanwhile, to address underlying conflicts, more activities were organized such as workshops for community organization, leadership & entrepreneurial skills development; and ratification of the coastal resources management (CRM) plan to support policies.

Grow plants on their own terms, not at your convenience," reminded Pew Fellow and AQD Scientist Emerita Dr. Jurgenne Primavera during her 17 November presentation on *Climate change mitigation: The need for science based reforestation, with emphasis on native flora*.



She said that mahogany, gmelina, and other exotic species planted for reforestation projects are not appropriate for biodiversity conservation and rehabilitation but are rather suitable for commercial plantations. She advises that the government and non-governmental organizations should plant native flora, all the more that the Philippines, a megadiversity center, prides of having 49 species of dipterocarps which are magnificent trees that grow and reproduce fast, making them ideal for rehabilitation projects.



Photoshoot @Dumarao

AQD's photographers took their cameras to the test. On 11 November, some 13 members of the class who took the *Photography using point-&-shoot camera course* last June visited Barangays Codingle and Tamulalod in Dumarao, Capiz. The photos taken have been used to promote AQD's online auction of artwork wherein proceeds will benefit said community partners with their livelihood projects.



It pays to know your benefits

Philam Life Corp. delivered *An employee benefits presentation for SEAFDEC/AQD* on 9 November. As AQD's new life insurance provider, Philam introduced its products and coverage benefits to a good number of AQD staff who were in attendance.

Employees get 24-hr insurance against loss of life due to natural or accidental causes. The value is equivalent to 48 times the monthly basic salary though this amount must not exceed Php 5 million. The same value / computation applies to accidental dismemberment and disablement.

There are also coverages for CIB/TIB (cancer, critical/terminal illness); accidental permanent total disability; injuries due to attempted homicide / murder; accidental medical reimbursement; daily hospital income for a maximum of 60 days; and others.

For more details, please contact the human resource office.



AQD's Christmas 2011

AQD Chief Dr. JD Toledo led the AQD community in the lighting of the giant Christmas tree on 9 Dec; the gift-giving activity for Brgy. Buyu-an on the 15th; the turnover of the live painting auction proceeds to the Malalison community also on the 15th; and the official Christmas program on the 16th.



Fare thee well!
 AQD bid adieu to its Training & Information Head Mr. Renato Agbayani who retires 31 Dec and to Library & DataBanking Services Section Head Ms. Luisa Pacino (retired in October). Friends and colleagues came to honor the two on 15 Dec, speaking well of their characters and long service to AQD. In turn, the two thanked AQD for the opportunities to advance their careers, build life-long friendships, and give security to their families.

Ms. Pacino and Mr. Agbayani are flanked by AQD Deputy Chief Dr. Teruo Azuma and AQD Chief Dr. Toledo



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is published monthly by the Development Communication Section
 SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department
 Tigbauan, Iloilo, Philippines

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