

## FOREWORD

It was indeed an opportune time for SEAFDEC to come up with an assessment of the status of *Penaeus vannamei* aquaculture in Southeast Asia since many shrimp growers have already shifted to *P. vannamei* culture, for the reason that it is easier to culture than the black tiger shrimp. Because of this trend, it has become necessary for SEAFDEC to conduct the Regional Technical Consultation on the Aquaculture of *P. vannamei* and Other Exotic Shrimps in Southeast Asia in March 2005, in order that countries in the region could assess and evaluate the risk and benefits from the farming of *P. vannamei* in their respective countries.

As we are already aware of, the region's shrimp industry had been dominated by the black tiger shrimp, *Penaeus monodon* – for a very long time. But during the past few years the dominance of *P. monodon* waned because of the introduction of the Pacific white shrimp, *Penaeus vannamei*, now becoming the most important farmed shrimp species in Asia. SEAFDEC does not want to ignore this shift in the preferred shrimp species for farming. This is especially so since in Southeast Asia there are a few countries that either have a policy of excluding exotic shrimp species or have not made up their minds as to whether or not to join the Asian trend of farming exotic shrimp species.

While the issue of *P. vannamei* introduction in Asia has been taken up in various meetings in the past, these were more in the context of the introduction of exotic species and the possible introduction of diseases. It was deemed necessary to have a forum where a comprehensive discussion focused on the experiences of countries that have already been farming *P. vannamei* and their respective assessments of risks and benefits.

It has been the consensus in the Consultation that the main impetus for the introduction and farming of *P. vannamei* in the region is the perceived superiority of the exotic species over the native stock of shrimp in terms of ease in farming, availability of broodstock and high potential yield. It was noted that countries farming *P. vannamei* have recognized the benefits outweighing the risks. It is commendable that the countries recognized the need to follow the international guidelines for the importation of live shrimps and the country-to-country rules and regulations.

Since the output of the Consultation was a Plan of Action to implement strategies in addressing problems and constraints on the introduction of *P. vannamei* and other exotic shrimp species in the region, it is hoped that future shrimp farming activities in the region could be based on such Plan of Action. In this way, the region could attain sustainability in shrimp aquaculture.



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