

A beginner's guide to aquaculture

Like the introductory collegiate courses, this issue would be our **Aquaculture 101**. It has just enough information for beginning aquaculturists to take note of the intricacies of a fish farming business.

Fish farming usually starts with finding a good site and then deciding what fish to culture. This issue presents the most common industry choices. It also includes two (Philippine) government programs, one on financial assistance from the LandBank and the other on volunteer experts fielded by the Department of Science and Technology.

The contents are essentially Philippine examples because of our limitation in getting first-hand information. Readers from other SEAFDEC member-countries need not fear. The process of getting started and running the farm are universal principles, and can apply to your farms too. We are also pretty sure there are similar institutions in your own countries that offer similar services to ours.

We interviewed two successful fish farmers who started with practically no knowledge in aquaculture. Their success can be emulated.



The letters that started this issue ...

From: <Regomon@aramco.com.sa>
5 March 2000

I obtained a copy of your August 1999 newsletter while on vacation in the Philippines, December-January, and was impressed with the way the newsletter is produced. I was specially intrigued by your special report entitled, "Searanching in a Quezon island, Philippines: toward sustainable livelihood for small fisherfolks" (pages 12-13; 38), because, Perez town, where that searanch is located, happens to be my hometown. Out of curiosity, I visited the place (it's been a while since I was there last) and managed to talk to the town mayor who turned out to be a not-too-distant relative of mine!

During the course of conversation, she emphasized that their primary concern is the lack of underwater video equipment to monitor the progress of coral growth within the enclosure, or whether or not breeder-groupers are multiplying. They also need to make sure that damage to the net enclosure (whether man-made or natural) is promptly fixed, to avoid escape of breeder fish. Well, after hearing all the "sob stories" I ended up committing myself to providing them with an underwater video system (costing around P50,000).

Anyway, the bottom line of this story is that, as a result of this encounter, I suddenly got myself interested in aquaculture — exactly the reason why I accessed your Web site on the Net. And you know what? I'd like to know more about aquaculture by undergoing whatever training SEAFDEC can offer, so that when I finally come home (perhaps within the next 2-3 years), I would be engaged in aqua/fish farming ...

Do you have training programs geared specifically for prospective (but ageing) entrepreneurs, more specifically for OCWs who are coming home for good (who are more or less inclined to set up their own business)? If so, I would be very grateful to receive your training schedule and figure out how I could adjust my next vacation to



coincide with it. For your information, I have inherited a 10-hectare piece of land that has since been acting like a natural fishpond. I said “natural” because, though undeveloped, milkfish, prawn and mudcrabs habitually grow on it with no human intervention at all. Of course, my neighbors are just too eager to harvest the bonanza during summertime when the soil dries up and those hapless creatures get caught in a few remaining pools of water where they congregate.

Well, this message is getting a bit too long, so, I have to park here . . . Thank you for your time.

Momoy Regodon
LAN Administrator
Saudi Arabian Oil Company

I just acquired a 5 hectare fishpond with tiger prawn in it. I would like to know the latest technology, especially the cheapest feeds. I also want to know the latest technology in raising lapu-lapu (grouper). And, we would like to subscribe to your publication regarding aquaculture.

Bonifacio Sia Jr.
Naga City

22 March 2000



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We also have a special write-up on making aquaculture more environment-friendly and a fun article on what aquaculture can be in the future.

We would like to mention that our choice of topic this issue has been inspired by two letters we recently received. These letters asked very basic questions on aquaculture which we are now glad to answer.



A -- mudcrab culture in pens in mangrove areas; B -- tilapia; C -- the seaweed Kappaphycus; D -- hanging culture method for oysters and mussels

