

A dam and a tilapia farm-nursery

By **MB Surtida**

Barangay Apasko in Batad, northern Iloilo is a visual feast with its lush green landscape even as El Niño turns Panay Island into a brown, parched terrain. This is so because the barangay is a proud owner of a multi-million peso dam (by the National Irrigation Administration) that irrigates the farms that surround it. As one approaches the dam, one is greeted by the scent of fresh vegetation and cool air which is almost palpable.

But the dam and the farms are only the props so to speak. For us aquaculturists, the floating cages stocked with tilapia are the actors, especially so because the cages are not just for grow-out but for nurseries as well.

The dam has 68 floating cages of size 12 x 15 x 6 m that produce more or less 10 tons of marketable fish per month. Each cage is stocked with 20 fish per m³. The tilapias are harvested when they reach size 6 pieces to a kilo and marketed locally at P40-45 per kilo. The harvest is sold at the Iloilo Fishing Port.

The nursery has 94 hapa cages (12 x 4 x 6 m). About 40-50,000 fry are nursed per month. The fry the farm uses are from San Miguel Corporation.



The Barangay Apasko dam with the tilapia cages and the surrounding lush vegetation.

The multi-million peso dam is partly seen at right.



The technician stands beside his rearing cages.



Both nursery and grow-out cages are well-kept and strictly monitored.

