

Fair Trade and aquaculture

The success of the Fairtrade development has widened interest in involving other sectors. For aquaculture, with significant growth in output and international trade over the last two decades, smallholder producers are increasingly vulnerable to market conditions, and as the sector becomes more competitive, the very valuable livelihood gains they have achieved in recent years may risk being lost. The prospect of using Fairtrade approaches for aquaculture therefore holds considerable interest. However, although there is an increasing pressure towards sustainable production, based primarily on environmental issues, nothing has been done to assess the potential for developing a Fairtrade approach in this sector. Although some initiatives are commencing, with e.g. labels for environmentally friendly and socially responsible production, such as the Shrimp Seal of Quality (SSOQ) created in Bangladesh, and various 'sustainable practice' accreditations created by the Marine Stewardship Council, these do not extend to trading

conditions, or specifically to smallholder producers.

There are clearly constraints to the practical application of Fairtrade systems to aquaculture, but potential advantages would justify exploring the prospects. Nowadays, environmental problems are a major concern in aquaculture and there is an increasing pressure towards sustainable production. Because farmers often deal with middlemen independently, they have little leverage, and this has a negative impact on prices paid to smallholders (Fairtrade production tends to eliminate those levels). Aquaculture plays an important role in livelihoods of numerous smallholders. According to the experience with coffee, Fairtrade labelling seems to be a good tool to alleviate poverty. However, whether or not Fairtrade is a useful tool in helping to alleviate these problems in relation to aquaculture is what I aim to address in the coming years

My project will be divided into three basic studies conducted in parallel:

Study	Aim
farmers/middlemen oriented study	to assess what farmers already know/think about fair trade and assess the possibilities of gathering the farmers in co-operatives, to establish a larger, more homogeneous product to export
technical feasibility study	to assess whether the products meet or would be able to meet the Fairtrade production standards and will aim at the development of a code of conduct for the Fairtrade aquaculture label
market study	to determine the market size for those products in the UK and their outlets

The Fairtrade Foundation:
<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>

FLO: <http://www.fairtrade.net/>

IFAT: <http://www.ifat.org/>

NEWS!: <http://www.worldshops.org/>

EFTA: <http://www.eftafairtrade.org/>

OXFAM: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/>

Traidcraft: <http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/>

BAFTS: <http://www.bafts.org.uk/index.html>

These studies will be carried out using case studies in different countries: contact is being made with projects in Bangladesh, Senegal and Peru and with people involved with Fairtrade in the UK.

The project aims to focus on more than one species: tilapia, catfish and shrimp. However, the species will depend on the case studies. Those species have been chosen because they are already exported, sold and eaten in developed countries (where the Fairtrade market is) and have a well-established market there (enough outlets).

The project is just starting, but I hope to give you more details of the progress of the research in future editions of Aquaculture News. Meanwhile, do not forget to look out for the Fairtrade label on the products you buy.

Immunology Workshop at Zhejiang Institute of Freshwater Fisheries, Huzhou, Peoples Republic of China

Professor Sandra Adams and Dr Kim Thompson of the Aquatic Vaccine Unit, Institute of Aquaculture, were recently invited to give an immunology workshop at Zhejiang Institute of Freshwater Fisheries, Huzhou Province in the Peoples Republic of China.

The workshop, funded by the Chinese government, consisted of a series of lectures covering immunodiagnosics, vaccine development and the immune system of fish. The workshop was held in Huzhou City, and was attended by over sixty delegates working on different aspects of fish health at Government Institutes and Universities throughout Huzhou Province.

