

INDIA TILAPIA SUMMIT – 2014 at Vijayawada, AP

“INDIA TILAPIA SUMMIT – 2014”, the first ever International Seminar in India on Tilapia Aquaculture and Trade was organized by Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Aquaculture (RGCA), the Research & Development arm of the Marine Products Export Development Authority, Govt. of India on the 18th December 2014 at Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh, the aquaculture hub of the Country. This Biennial event was organized by RGCA to sensitize Indian Tilapia farmers, entrepreneurs, scientists, industry practitioners/stakeholders, policy makers, planners and the academe on Tilapia farming across the globe, the technological developments in production & processing, global markets, current trends etc. and also to harness the enormous potential of this species for aquaculture diversification thereby contributing to the export basket of the Country. Shri. Y.C. Thampi Sam Raj, Project Director RGCA welcomed the guests, speakers and delegates to the Tilapia India Summit 2014.



Dignitaries on the dais during the Inaugural function of the India Tilapia Summit 2014

The event was inaugurated by Ms. Leena Nair, IAS, President RGCA and Chairman MPEDA by lighting the traditional lamp. In her inaugural address, President RGCA expressed concern that though Seafood exports from the country had touched an all-time high of 5 billion USD, it was farmed shrimp that was the major contributor and other species such as Cobia, Sea bass and Mud Crab were yet to create any significant impact on exports. Ms. Nair also pointed out that if just 10% of the existing Freshwater farming area in the state of Andhra Pradesh was used for Tilapia farming, the state would be able to produce over 12 lakhs metric tons of Tilapia for exports worth Rs. 8000 crores. However, several issues pertaining to permission, registration and approval for Tilapia breeding and farming need to be resolved at the earliest to make

this a reality. President RGCA also thanked the Fisheries minister and other senior officials of the department for timely steps taken in this direction.



Ms. Leena Nair IAS, Chairman, MPEDA, lighting the Inaugural lamp

Dr. Manmohan Singh, IAS, Principal Secretary to the Govt. of Andhra Pradesh presided over the function. In his presidential address, Dr. Singh outlined the mission of Andhra Pradesh to usher in a blue revolution through aquaculture diversification and increase the aquaculture production of fish in the state from the present level of 1.8 lakh tonnes to 3.5 lakh tonnes by the year 2019. Dr. Singh added that Tilapia being an excellent candidate species that have great international demand should be promoted for large scale aquaculture in the state and announced that the Govt. of Andhra Pradesh had issued a GO for Aquaculture of Tilapia in the State.



Dr. Manmohan Singh, IAS, Principal Secretary to the Govt. of Andhra Pradesh delivering the Presidential address

Dr. M. Vijaya Gupta, Former Assistant Director General, World Fish Center and World Food Prize Laureate delivered the Key Note address while Dr. E.G. Silas, former Director of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, former Vice Chancellor of the Kerala Agricultural University and the present Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Committee of RGCA also spoke on the need for promoting Tilapia Aquaculture in the Country.



Dr. M. Vijaya Gupta, Former ADG, WorldFish Center (left) delivering the Key Note address



Dr. E.G. Silas, Chairman of the SAC of RGCA (right) speaking on the importance for Tilapia Aquaculture in the country

Shri. M. Seetharama Raju, President, AP State Fish Farmers Association delivered felicitation address while Dr. Kolli Premchand and Shri. George Alexander, Tilapia farmers from the states of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala respectively spoke of their success stories on Tilapia farming during the inaugural function.



Shri. M. Seetharama Raju



Dr. Kolli Premchand

This event also featured the second edition of the Annual Dr. E. G. Silas Endowment Lecture that RGCA organizes each year as a tribute to the contributions of the living legend in the field of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Dr. E.G. Silas, former Director, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, former Vice Chancellor, Kerala Agricultural University and the current Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Committee of RGCA. Dr. Ram C. Bhujel, Director – Aqua Centre, Asian Institute of Technology Thailand, and a household name among Tilapia enthusiasts across the world, delivered this lecture on Seed Production, Grow-out Farming, Health Management and Biosecurity Systems in Tilapia Aquaculture which was received with rapt attention by the participants. This was the first presentation of the technical session.

The technical sessions had several international Tilapia Scientists and Market Analysts who delivered lectures on various topics such as the available commercial technologies worldwide with regard to breeding, seed production, grow-out farming systems, disease management, biosecurity requirements, selective breeding, advanced high intensive Recirculation Aquaculture production systems, saline resistant/tolerant strains, the current status of tilapia aquaculture in the world, global markets, market trends and potential for the future.



Dr. Lind Curtis

Prof. Ori Lahav



Mr. Ruel Eguia



Mr. Chee Kiat



Mr. Angel D. Rubio



Ms. Shirlene Maria Anthonsamy

Dr. Lind Curtis, Scientist, Aquaculture & Genetic Improvement, WorldFish, Malaysia, Prof. Ori Lahav, Technion, Israel, Mr. Ruel Eguia, Aquaculture Farm Manager, CDO Foodsphere Inc., Philippines, Mr. Chee Kiat Inter Sea Fishery (M) Pvt Ltd, Malaysia, Mr. Angel D. Rubio, Chief Analyst and Director of Business Development for Latin America URNER BARRY, NJ, USA and Ms. Shirlene Maria Anthonsamy, Trade Promotion Officer, INFOFISH, Malaysia were the prominent International speakers at the event.



Dr. P.E. Vijay Anand



Dr. P. Routray



Mr. S. Vaitheeswaran



Mr. U. Murali Anand Varma



Mr. Arun Kumar



Mr. Jaideep Kumar

Indian Speakers included Dr. P.E. Vijay Anand, Director – India Animal Feed, Aquaculture and Soy Meal Program, US Soybean Export Council Inc, Dr. P. Routray, Principal Scientist – Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, Mr. S. Vaitheeswaran, Managing Partner, Svara Biotechnovations, Tamil Nadu, Mr. U. Murali Anand Varma, Ananda Group, Bhimavaram, Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Arun Kumar, Aresen Biotech & Farms India Pvt. Ltd., Andhra Pradesh and Mr. Jaideep Kumar, Project Manager – Coordination, Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Aquaculture, Tamil Nadu.

The technical sessions were chaired by Dr. E.G. Silas, Chairman, Scientific Advisory Committee of RGCA & Dr. Ambekar E. Eknath, Former Director General of NACA, Bangkok and Co-chaired by Shri. P. Mohanasundaram, Director MPEDA and Dr. T.C. Santiago, Retd. Principal Scientist, Central Institute of Brackish water Aquaculture, Chennai and Member, SAC of RGCA respectively.



Experts Chairing the Technical sessions



Experts of the Panel Discussions

The final session of the event – the “Panel Discussions”, was a highly interactive session, wherein several delegates representing farmer groups, entrepreneurs, potential hatchery operators, processors, govt. officials and members of the academe expressed their views to promote and popularize Tilapia aquaculture in the country and discussed on the impediments that came in the way which needed to be addressed immediately.



Project Director RGCA, Shri. Y.C. Thampi Sam Raj delivering the welcome address



Dr. S. Kandan, DD (Aqua), MPEDA RC Vijayawada delivering the Vote of Thanks during the event

Experts of the panel, Ms. Leena Nair, Dr. E. G. Silas, Dr. M. Vijaya Gupta, Dr. Ambekar E. Eknath, Dr. Lind Curtis and Dr. P. Routray provided several recommendations in line with the discussions that are briefly outlined below:

1. The requirement for registrations/approvals for Tilapia farming is needed to keep a check on tilapia farming and also to sustain the tilapia culture in the country. This should not be considered as an impediment to the progression of the tilapia industry.
2. The licensing issues of the farmers should be addressed and resolved soon through the joint efforts of Government organisations/institutions including MPEDA, ICAR and Ministry of Agriculture. A Committee should be formed to monitor and guide the farmers involved in tilapia farming.
3. RGCA should organize frequent training programmes on tilapia breeding and farming and help in disseminating and propagating tilapia culture in the Country.
4. MPEDA would assess the market potential of tilapia in the Country and overseas and assist in establishing Tilapia Processing Units.
5. Entry of unauthorized Tilapia seed into the Country should be strictly checked.
6. Accurate assessment of the progress of the tilapia industry in the country to be conducted so as to enable the sector to formulate better informed development policies, strategies and plans that would help in ensuring food security through tilapia aquaculture.

The Panel also noted the need to hasten the process of granting permission for tilapia farming and also to encourage small scale farmers and sensitize them about the need for responsible tilapia farming through training and awareness programmes by centres like RGCA. The Panel also recommended to focus on market development and trade which would further improve the demand for tilapia culture in the Country.

The event was a resounding success with a massive participation from across the Country. A total of 324 delegates registered for the event from 12 states of the Country; Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Odisha, West Bengal, Chattisgarh, Telengana, Goa, Pondicherry and Madhya Pradesh and includes Aqua farmers, Hatchery operators, exporters, entrepreneurs, aquaculture professionals, Govt. officials and members of the academe. This turnout is a true reflection of the pulse of the Indian Aqua farmer and his need for diversification of Aquaculture.

The suggestions obtained during the panel discussions as well as the recommendations made by the expert panel would enable to take relevant decisions to hasten the efforts in popularizing Tilapia aquaculture in the country.

Observations and Opinions of the Speakers and Participants

- India has not taken advantage of potential of Tilapia Aquaculture that is increasingly given importance in rest of the world.
- Special permission to culture Tilapia should not be made mandatory: Tilapia is not a banned fish for farming in India. Hence, a special permission should not be a prime mandate or requisite in order for the farmers to culture this fish in the Country. Moreover, it is not logical to obtain permissions for each finfish species culture from the Government (species specific permissions)
- Tilapia had shown to reduce the incidence of Early Mortality Syndrome (EMS/AHPND) in Shrimp farming systems and hence co-culturing of Shrimp with Tilapia is known to sustain the production and profitability of both Tilapia as well as Shrimp culture. Therefore supply of all male Tilapia to Shrimp farmers may be permitted.
- A realistic survey on tilapia farming and fisheries production in India need to be carried out by Fisheries Research Organizations/Govt. bodies.
- MPEDA should assist in establishment of tilapia processing plants and marketing.
- RGCA should conduct more outreach programmes to train and sensitize the farmers and entrepreneurs about tilapia breeding and farming.
- Unauthorised entry of tilapia seeds into the Country be strictly prohibited.
- Farmers Association should be given the right to fix the Farm gate value of the fish.
- Cost of Tilapia seed to be reduced for the benefit of farmers.

- Organic mode of tilapia farming as well as Tilapia Farming in Recirculation Aquaculture Systems (RAS) be encouraged.
- Experts from NGO bodies such as Society for Aquaculture Professionals and others be roped in to contribute to the technical knowledge on tilapia farming and also to address issues if any.
- Tilapia Summit organized by RGCA be made as an annual event.
- Government at an early date should give permission to RGCA to supply Tilapia broodstock to the breeding centres and hatcheries, for successful propagation.



Experts of the Panel with the Organizing Committee of ITS 2014