

Aquaculture Innovation Network News



Highlights

- Reporting on some initial findings from the project study; especially in the Czech Republic, Poland and Estonia
- Updates on future activities and the development of the project web site
- A focus on the project coordinator and a preview of the forthcoming workshop on "New Challenges in Pond Aquaculture"

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EC Innovation Project: CSN-INTRAN (IPS-2001-42123)

Study visits reveal diversity of needs

As part of the Aquaculture Innovation Network's initial study into innovation and technology transfer in European aquaculture, members of the consortium made assessment visits to the Czech Republic, Estonia and Poland during September 2004. The objective was to meet a range of stakeholders representing different types of business or organisation, and to visit their facilities to better understand their situation, needs, ambitions, constraints and current difficulties. This is an essential step in developing meaningful services and concrete recommendations for future actions.

The team found considerable diversity of situations within each country, but also some common themes. Some of the key issues for each country are discussed later in this newsletter. In all of the countries there were examples of organisations that were to varying extents still

heavily influenced by former soviet approaches, finding it difficult to adapt to the increasingly globalised market economy. However, there were also examples of energetic entrepreneurs



Members of the study team and hosts at a trout farm in Poland

who have taken advantage of the opportunities offered by the economic and political changes, and who are actively engaged in international trade, technology transfer and collaborations.

Promotion at EuroTier 2004

The network will be presented in the "Forum Aquaculture" at EuroTier 2004. This is one of Europe's largest agro-industry exhibitions with associated conferences held in Hannover, Germany from 9th–12th November. Project partners will also be on-hand in the "Aquaculture Advisory Centre" to talk about the project, and to offer impartial advice to organisations and individuals who are either already involved in

aquaculture and are interested in innovations, partnerships and technology transfer, or to those who are considering entering the aquaculture sector for the first time.



Czech Republic



Carp and other freshwater fish are produced in extensive pond systems

Aquaculture for food species in the Czech Republic is primarily carried out in large extensive pond systems. These have a long history, with written records dating back to the 11th Century. Farming methods intensified during the soviet era, but are now constrained by environmental, conservation and flood-protection objectives.

The study team visited production companies and research and teaching institutions and met with representatives of the carp producers association. Further work is now in progress to consider if greater advantage can be obtained from the green credentials of Czech carp, linked with high quality and improvements to processing, packing, presentation and promotion.

Also under investigation is the possibilities for increasing production and productivity through

the use of environmentally controlled hatcheries and nursery systems, especially for more valuable predatory species.

Any new initiatives will have to stand up to economic scrutiny and attract fresh investment funds, but the team are particularly excited about the possibilities in this country.



Fresh carp fillet from a leading Czech producer

“The visit found a thriving industry that is expanding production and taking advantage of easier trade with neighbouring countries”

Poland

Polish aquaculture is dominated by trout in the North and Carp in the South of the country. The visit focused mainly on the trout sector and found a thriving industry that is expanding production and taking advantage of easier trade with neighboring countries. Nevertheless it is far from immune from the pressures of competition and modernisation of facilities and practices remains a priority for many farmers.

Fish health problems appeared to be greater in Poland due to intensive use of water resources and farming methods. This will therefore be a priority for further project interventions.



State of the art processing facilities in Poland

Estonia



Eel farming is a new success story for Estonia

The aquaculture industry in Estonia is small, but includes a range of species, from salmon for restocking to crayfish for the Scandinavian market.

The team met a number of innovative entrepreneurs, but also saw farms that had changed little since the fall of communism, and whose owners were struggling to continue the business.

The project aims to help strengthen the aquaculture sector in Estonia by encouraging inter-

national collaboration and facilitating knowledge transfer. This applies to both public and private sectors where opportunities also exist for strengthening internal links, such as those between farmers and the processing sector, or between universities and government farms.

As in other New Member States, opportunities exist for developing new products, or developing new approaches such as the integration of aquaculture with tourism, leisure and other countryside activities.

Masters project on carp processing and marketing

As a contribution to the project study, John Nikolaidis, a Masters student at the University of Stirling, studied carp processing as a means of enhancing the market for carp for his thesis dissertation. This involved a fact-finding trip to the Brussels Seafood Expo, a visit to the carp farming cooperative ADAPRA in France and farms and processors in Hungary, hosted by the Hungarian Fisheries Research Institute (HAKI). The study found that whilst there are a range of processing methods in use, less than 20% of carp is processed and the majority of sales are for a traditional seasonal market that offers relatively low values. A comparison was made with the catfish industry in the USA, where producer cooperation and clear focus on product development and promotion has lifted catfish to the leading farm-raised fish product. John has since developed some of the materials as a contribution to the project's website knowledgebase



Carp processing in Hungary, and (inset) John Nikolaidis with finished product from ADAPRA in France

Future events

Based on the initial findings of the study, a number of actions are being arranged to help foster technology transfer:

- April 26-28, 2005: Workshop on New Challenges in Pond Aquaculture, České Budějovice, Czech Republic
- May 17-19 2005: Course on new vaccines and vaccination strategies, Poland
- August 7-13, 2005: Study visit to Norway (including AquaNor and Innovation Workshop at Aquaculture Europe Conference)

- September 26-30, 2005: Course in environmentally controlled systems (recycle and ecological), Szarvas, Hungary
- November 7-11, 2005: Study visit to Germany

Further details about these events, including booking details, will be available on the project web site, or on request from the address at the end of this newsletter. Project partners will also be taking the opportunity to present the network at other international, national and local aquaculture meetings.

“The project will be facilitating meetings and knowledge exchange through study visits, workshops and courses ”

Aquainnovation.net

The project's website at www.aquainnovation.net is continuing to develop. In addition to information about the project and consortium partners (including documents and presentations to download), it also has a forum for discussions and a facility to register interest in future updates and communications. Work is now underway to improve the graphics and to introduce multi-language facilities. The revised site will be closely linked with the Aquamedia service (www.aquamedia.org) and share some of its facilities. Four new sections will be introduced, firstly a

knowledgebase on innovation and technology transfer, to give SMEs the information they need to take more effective action. A second partnering section will be added to help SMEs more effectively network and cooperate both with each other and with research and other relevant organisations. The third section will be a selection of benchmarking tools to help stimulate thinking and performance assessment for SMEs, whilst the fourth section will provide useful online learning modules.





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VISIT US AT
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Partner focus

University of Stirling:

The Institute of Aquaculture at the University of Stirling is coordinating the project through its project management and consultancy arm "Stirling Aquaculture". With a wide range of project experience in many countries, Stirling Aquaculture brings expertise in sector analysis, commercial experience in developing aquaculture projects, and training experience in providing a range of short courses. The Institute of Aquaculture is one of the largest centres of aquaculture research and teaching in the world, offering a wide range of research collaborations in areas such as health management, environmental interactions, genetics and reproduction, nutrition, aquaculture development, economics and marketing.



Stirling University campus with the Wallace Monument in the background

Event focus—New Challenges in Pond Aquaculture, April 2005

This event is being hosted by the University of South Bohemia at České Budějovice in the Czech Republic—a region almost as well known for its beer production (e.g. Budwies) as for its extensive carp ponds!

The workshop will address the wide-ranging concept of pond aquaculture, although particular importance will be given to less intensive and environmentally friendly approaches. Semi-intensive and extensive fish farming technologies in earthen ponds, usually exceeding several hectares in area, are the major types of fish production in the Czech Republic and in selected regions of Central and Eastern Europe. Recently, the sector has been facing increasing demands for implementation of non-production pond utilisation, notably landscape formation and protection, recreation, water protection and pond management issues. The workshop sessions will examine a wide range of approaches associated with pond production, such as integrated farming systems, organic farming, biological background of fish pond production, nature-friendly control mechanisms of pond environment, the role of protected plant and animal

species, multifunctional use of ponds and economic and marketing issues.

The workshop will run over 3 days (26-28 April 2005) and will have an accompanying trade exhibition (FISHTECH). There will also be a trip to the Research Institute of Fish Culture and Hydrobiology in Vodňany. Papers (oral and posters) are invited for the event. Further information is available from the Aqualnnovation web site.



RIFCH Aquaculture station at Vodňany

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