

# Aquaculture Innovation Network News



## Highlights

- Report from the Future Aquaculture conference on the challenges facing the industry in Southern & Eastern Europe
- Report from the workshop on innovation in aquaculture held in Stirling in June 2006
- A focus on CSN-INTRAN partner AQIM.
- Looking forward to Conferences and exhibitions in 2007

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## Challenges—the source of innovation

Every organisation, and especially businesses, face a wide range of challenges. There are the day-to-day challenges of maintaining operations and efficiency whilst dealing with staff absence, bad weather, unreliable suppliers, or equipment failures. Then there are the less frequent, but more serious challenges, such as the outbreak of a fish disease, or quality control problems and unhappy customers (or clients). Taking a more strategic view, an ever-changing market place, competitive pressures, new environmental and consumer legislation, pressures for more sustainable use of natural resources, rising energy prices or the prospect of climate change can all add further stress. Faced with uncertainty or even direct challenges, it is often tempting to resist change, to protect established practices and allow past experience and established convention to act as guide. For innovative companies however, problems are there to be solved, and challenges are the inspiration for future innovation and business

growth. However, it is easy to talk about seeing trends in the market and taking advantage of them, or not being satisfied with current solutions and seeking something better, but often



Floods in the Czech Republic in 2006 illustrating just one of the many climatic and environmental challenges facing aquaculture

much harder to do in practice. That's where networks and collaborations can help join up capabilities and resources and enable even the smallest companies to innovate.

## Why register?

Filling in web forms is never fun, but becoming a registered user of the Aquainnovation.net site will give you full access to the information databases and discussion forums, and enable you to receive this newsletter by e-mail. We ask for minimum information, simply to maintain the security of our services. No use will be made of your personal data without your permission, nor will it be passed to any third parties. If you are already registered with Aquamedia then you can

log straight in using your Aquamedia username and password. Once logged on, update your profile to ensure you are registered for the Aquainnovation newsletter. If you are registering for the first time, pick a suitable login-name and fill in the remaining details. You will receive a password by e-mail. The service is free, but excellent value!

**Site access:**

Login:

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[Free Registration](#)

*“The report on the innovation workshop held in Stirling has now been published”*

## Innovation workshop report published

As reported in the previous newsletter, an Innovation workshop was held at the University of Stirling in June 2006. The report from the workshop has now been published on the Aquainnovation.net website (Resources section). The main report is just 9 pages, and summarises the key discussion points and recommendations arising out of the day. The more extensive annexes contain copies of speaker presentations, outputs from the four workgroups and some of the preparatory discussion materials. Topics discussed included: constraints and opportunities for innovation; institutional support; innovation projects; the role of SME producers and supply companies in innovation; collaboration and competition; access to information and communications. Some of the recommendations are highlighted below. It is hoped that the



Some of the workshop participants during the opening session

report will stimulate further discussion and lead to new collaborative initiatives that foster learning, innovation and technology transfer within the aquaculture sector.



## Workshop recommendations

- The future of SMEs in the aquaculture sector will depend on their ability to respond to emerging challenges such as sustainability and quality assurance, so future support programmes will need to focus on innovations that carry such companies forward.
- The industry needs to take a more pro-active approach to public relations, both to assure customers of the quality and safety of the products, but also to interest younger people in a career in the sector.
- Further engagement is needed to develop a

more comprehensive and transparent analysis of innovation processes and how all stages are best supported

- More local/regional workshops are needed to disseminate EC funded research and help SMEs to meet researchers and build collaborative links.
- Greater involvement of all key stakeholders in setting research priorities is essential. This may need to be done at regional/industry level to account for the considerable diversity within the European aquaculture sector.

### Particular focus on SMEs:

*“innovation was seen as essential for a healthy industry that responds to changing needs”*

- Greater emphasis is required on transfer of innovation into SMEs and this would be best implemented within the commercial sector by professional managers.
- SMEs should be encouraged to promote learning by their staff and provide appropriate reward mechanisms for staff that pursue further training and contribute towards company innovation.
- Innovation projects can be developed out of partnerships along the value chain rather

than involving direct competitors. Industry associations can also do much to foster and focus collaborative efforts.

- SMEs within the aquaculture value chain need better information systems, to help with market intelligence, quality and production optimisation issues.
- Further investment is needed in highly targeted training courses, involving greater collaboration between industrial and academic partners.

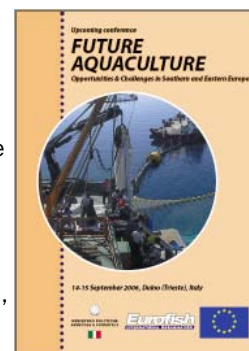
## Future Aquaculture – Opportunities and Challenges in Southern and Eastern Europe

The conference “Future Aquaculture – Opportunities and Challenges in Southern and Eastern Europe” was held on 14 and 15 September 2006 in Duino, Italy. The conference was organised by EUROFISH supported by the European Commission, Italy’s Ministry for Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies, the Italian Fish Farmers’ Association and Skretting. 120 participants from 20 countries attended the conference.

### Highlights:

In Europe, the share of imported fish has increased from 40 to 60% over the last 10 years. Fish originating from aquaculture has increased over the last 30 years from a few to fifty percent. The main areas of growth in production are the N. Atlantic and the Mediterranean areas. Consequently, the sector is facing increased competi-

tion for available land/site and water. The consumer is becoming more aware of quality, food safety and the environmental consequences of the production. The main focus is today moving toward better quality of the production, more environmentally friendly and more cost effective production technologies. Lack of knowledge amongst political decision makers, investors and in the media was clearly reported. A main conclusion of the conference was that: “In future aquaculture, Sustainability is not an option, but an obligation”. This includes production methods and management in both environmental and social-economical senses.



Full details about the conference, and copies of the speaker presentations may be found on the Eurofish web site: [www.eurofish.dk](http://www.eurofish.dk). Text for this report was provided by Guðmundur Örn Ingólfsson of AQIM.

### Future challenges identified at the conference:

- Definition of and knowledge about how globalisation affects European aquaculture.
- Definition of available land and water resources available for aquaculture activity.
- New environmentally friendly technology and cost saving production methods must be continuously developed in co-operation between member states. This includes quality control and methods enabling labelling of the products.
- Definition of new species rearing for future farming in Europe.
- Definition of a strategy in the future food

supply for the fish farming, mainly addressed to the carnivorous species.

- Clearer definition of the market trends and the customer’s need. Implementation of processing technology enabling adaptation of the products to the customers needs.
- Definition of the role and future of traditional E. European production methods as a part of European aquaculture tradition. The need for education and training is defined mainly in the new member states.

*“In future aquaculture, Sustainability is not an option, but an obligation”*

### Promotion and flow of information:

- The EU decision making for public financial support has been moved to the member states. Many of the speakers addressed lack of knowledge and understanding for the needs and strategy of the aquaculture business in their respective countries. Quality control of public decision makers and European organisation taking care of the aquaculture sector’s interests was discussed.
- Consumers are expressing negative attitude to the farmed products, but at the same time, are confused about the origin of the product they are buying. Modern methods in

quality control and traceability, combined with increased flow of information must aim to make the consumer more comfortable with the products. Still, a common “producer-customer language” is lacking.

We have today many large international companies. Nevertheless, too much of the production comes from companies producing tens to a few hundred tons. Many are struggling because of difficulties in providing new capital for both operational procedures and new investments. More co-ordinated promotion toward investors is needed. This must be based on co-operation between member states.



Duino Castle, where the conference was held.



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

Coordinator:  
Institute of Aquaculture  
University of Stirling  
Stirling FK9 4LA UK  
Phone: +44 (0)1786-467900  
Fax: +44 (0)1786-451462  
Email: info@aquainnovation.net

VISIT US AT  
[WWW.AQUAINNOVATION.NET](http://WWW.AQUAINNOVATION.NET)

## Partner focus

### AQIM

AQIM is the consultancy company of Icelander Guðmundur Örn Ingólfsson, better known to most of his friends and colleagues as "Gundi". After leaving school, he spent several years working on Icelandic fisheries vessels before training as a primary and secondary school teacher and teaching in Eskifjörður, Iceland. However, with the aquaculture industry starting to expand, he moved to Denmark to study at the University of Copenhagen, conducting research in the food intake and growth of gilthead seabream, turbot and sea bass larvae.

From here, he moved back to Iceland to work with the Marine Research Institute before managing, coordinating or participating in a string of commercial and EC-

supported projects on marine fish culture in Iceland and Sweden, including AQUA-MAKI, MARI-TECH and MISTRAL MAR. Particular areas of expertise are the design of recirculated systems, fish hatcheries and EC project coordination and management. Gundi is now based in Denmark and is available for consultancy work or participation in further innovatory and collaborative projects.



Guðmundur Örn Ingólfsson (at the University Square in Rostock in the cascade with name of "Brunnen für des Lebens Freude")

## Event focus— forthcoming conferences and exhibitions



**Polfish**, the 9th International Fair of Fish Processing and Fish Products is scheduled

for 29-31st April 2007 in Gdańsk, Poland. This is one of the largest events of its type in Central and Eastern Europe and CSN-INTRAN partner, Eurofish is one of the event organisers. More information is available at [www.polfishfair.pl](http://www.polfishfair.pl).



The European Aquaculture Society are organising two main events in 2007. Firstly the **AQUANOR FORUM 2007**, which provides a forum for science, industry, consumers and policy makers to review developments in the aquaculture sector and to discuss the key issues that affect those developments. The forum will address the issue of **welfare as a driver for technological development in aquaculture**. The event will be held on 15-16th August 2007 within the Aqua Nor exhibition (14-17 August in Trondheim, Norway).

The second event, **Aquaculture Europe 2007** will be held in Istanbul from 24-27 October. The conference theme "**Competing claims**" addresses the various levels of competition that aquaculture faces at present, but upon which its future development will depend. The event will combine a scientific conference with an industry exhibition, and include a special 'farmers day' and the AE2007

student forum. As always, various social events will be a part of the Aquaculture Europe meeting. Further information about both events is available on the EAS website: [www.easonline.org](http://www.easonline.org)



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