

What is going on in the Mexican Aquaculture Industry

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Around 49% of the world fisheries production comes from aquaculture, which has had an average annual growth rate of 10% in the 1990-2010 period. That makes it the productive activity with the highest growth in the world.

In Mexico, aquaculture represents 18% of the domestic fisheries with an average annual growth rate of 2.6%. With the absence of both, efficient strategies from producers, and clear public policies, this trend is likely to prevail.

Fisheries in Mexico are highly-spot concentrated. Sardine (*Sardinops sagax sagax*), tuna fish (*Thunnus var*) and shrimp fishing represents 59%. Per region, Sonora, Baja California, and Veracruz represent 75% of the total production.

Shrimp represents more than 60% of the aquaculture production and with an average annual growth rate of 19% in the 1990-2010-year period, is, without doubt, the aquaculture activity with the highest growth in the country..

The development of fish farming in freshwater is advancing slowly. The exploited species are tilapia, carp, catfish, and trout. Lack of technology, poor regulation of the activity, lack of credits, and lack of integration of the parts of the value network have all contributed to this poor performance.

Mexico has an enormous potential to accelerate the growth of aquaculture as an organized, competitive, and sustainable activity. The country has 11,000 km. of coastline, and a 2.9 million sq. kilometer exclusive economic zone.

In Mexico there is a great variety of species susceptible of commercial exploitation: mackerel, yellow tail (*Seriola lalandi*), flounder (*Paralich is SSP*), seabass (*Atractoscion nobilis*), abalon, oyster, scallops, octopus, etc. The per capita consumption of seafood is 13.05 Kg. from which shrimp consumption represents 1.780 Kg.

90% of Mexico's shrimp exports go to the US, in 2010, the case of the American market was a once-in –a lifetime situation, due to the lack of supply of mid and big size shrimp by the Asian countries along with the oil spill in the Gulf of México. This caused a price increase of the Mexican shrimp of up to 30% from December 2009 until December 2010.

However due to the breakout of the white spot disease (wssv) shrimp production diminished in 40,000 tons which only caused exports to increase in about 14%.

The prevailing problem of the white spot disease in Mexico has provoked a reduction in the stock densities. This has resulted, in turn, in the development of less-dense diets where fish meal has been partly replaced by chicken meal of premium quality.

Another innovation in shrimp handling is the use of raceways, which objective is to stock a larvae of at least 150 mg and reduce the final crop time.