

Establishment of ASEAN Good Aquaculture Practices

Introduction

Aquaculture in the South East Asian countries is not only important because of its contribution to food security and nutrition, countries in South East Asia also depend heavily on the aquaculture sub-sector, as a critical contributor to national and regional social and economic development with contributions to the rural economy, foreign exchange. Six countries in the ASEAN region including Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, are ranked among the top twenty five countries in terms of aquaculture volume. Cambodia, with its productive inland fisheries is also ranked amongst this list.

If aquaculture in South East Asia is to continue its growth, standards must be set in place to address issues important to consumers including food safety, animal health, environmental sustainability and worker related issues. All of these must be addressed to sustain the growth of the aquaculture industry in the ASEAN region. As the ASEAN integration and ASEAN economic community develops it becomes important that standards must be recognised mutually between the ASEAN Member States (AMSs). This mutual recognition can be facilitated if there are harmonised standards in place to address Good Aquaculture Practices in the aquaculture industry across all ten member States. Not only will this facilitate intra ASEAN trade but it will go a long way to satisfy export requirements and facilitate exports as the ASEAN community develops.

As economic integration approached the ASEAN Secretariat is developing a number of ASEAN specific standards to facilitate intra ASEAN and extra ASEAN trade including a Good Aquaculture Practices (GAqP) standard.

Results

To accelerate the introduction of GAqP standards across the ASEAN region, the ASEAN Secretariat has been working on a project “Establishment of ASEAN GAqP” funded by the AADCP II and managed by the ASEAN Secretariat. The project began in October 2013 and finished in 2014 and during the course of this project an ASEAN

**This policy brief is prepared with the support by Global F.S. Pty Ltd as part of the Australian government funded project, Establishment of ASEAN Good Aquaculture Practices (GAqP). The views expressed in this executive summary are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of ASEAN and its member states nor impose any binding obligations on them.*

specific GAqP for food fish was developed by experts from every AMS.

The scope of the ASEAN GAqP (Food fish) covers practices that are mainly aimed at preventing or minimizing the risks in four areas of production. Namely food safety, animal health and welfare, environmental integrity and socio-economic aspects associated with aquaculture of food fish. The coverage of GAqP (food fish) will include mariculture, coastal aquaculture/ brackish water culture, and freshwater culture. The agreed GAqP will cover pre-production, production, harvesting and post-harvest handling prior to transportation. The ASEAN GAqP (food fish) standard will be used by AMS that do not have a GAqP standard in place to develop a country specific standard and will also be used by AMS that have GAqP standards in place to harmonize their country GAqP to the new ASEAN GAqP (food fish) standard.

The project has also developed a strategic plan for implementation of GAqP across ASEAN. This plan covers the following strategic approaches:

- 1- Setting up a mechanism to manage ASEAN GAqP at regional level and at National level.
- 2- Development of documents for the interpretation of ASEAN GAqP for Government officials
- 3- Develop a time table for the development of parts two and three (part 2; Ornamental Fish and part 3; Aquatic Plants).
- 4- Development and implementation of documents and GAqP in the ASEAN member States that do not have a GAqP in place at the moment using ASEAN GAqP
- 5- Strengthening the Alignment of national GAqP with ASEAN GAqP through benchmarking exercise and using common training material supplemented by country specific material with the assistance of national working groups.
- 6- Develop documentation for a common recognition mechanism and certification system including the development of documentation for auditing / training procedures and a quality assurance system for ASEAN to use to check if ASEAN GAqP is implemented correctly.

Policy recommendations

In order to satisfy export markets some ASEAN Member States have developed country specific GAqP standards, however these differ from each other and focus on different areas of aquaculture. Some AMS have not developed meaningful GAqP standards or have not implemented them successfully. What is needed for a successful ASEAN economic integration is for all AMS to be actively involved in harmonizing standards including GAqP standards.

In order to achieve the aim all AMS should:

- 1- Assist with the nomination of technical experts and support these experts to be part of the ASEAN expert working group on GAqP. They will develop the road map for the future of ASEAN GAqP. In addition AMS need to establish and support National technical working groups to undertake tasks at National level including benchmarking exercises, changes to National GAqP, changes to training material and retraining of farmers to meet the ASEAN GAqP standard.

- 2- Assist with the publication and dissemination of the ASEAN GAqP (food fish) to Government officials and assist with the production of an interpretation guideline so that Government officials understand what the requirements are.
- 3- Assist with the development of a timetable for the preparation of part 2 and part 3 of the proposed GAqP list of documents involving aquatic plants and ornamental fish
- 4- AMS that do not have GAqP (food fish) in place should, through supporting Government laws or directives and their National technical working groups, implement a GAqP (food fish). They should develop a roadmap for implementation of GAqP at country level.
- 5- AMS that have a GAqP in place should harmonise this against ASEAN GAqP (food fish) through their national technical working groups.
- 6- Assist with the development of documents for a common recognition mechanisms and certification systems. All AMS should assist with developing training material to train trainers and to train farmers. Common educational material will further enhance harmonisation between countries GAqP.