



AARM Newsletter

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Aquatic Animal Feed and Nutrition

Editorial

Feeding of fish has a long history; it existed since three millenia ago. Research on fish nutrition preceded human nutrition studies, as fish were the animals first used for trials to understand the process of digestion and human nutrition. However, scientific research to develop fish diets was started only in 1927 and the first nutritionally complete diet was produced in 1955. In the last two decades commercial fish farming expanded as a result of advancement in fish nutrition, feeds and feeding techniques. But research on fish nutrition is still lagging behind the research done on the nutrition of livestock and crops.

Why talk of nutrition of fish and other aquatic animals when millions of people are still starving due to lack of food and malnutrition? The answer is that we care for human being through fish nutrition. In other words, we feed fish to feed ourselves.

AARM has played a significant role in fish and aquatic animal nutrition research especially for the semi-intensive system. Keeping the central focus on resource poor farmers of the region it developed the strategies of pond fertilization and supplementary feeding using cheap and easily available farm by-products. These strategies were also tested in the farmers' fields. Peter Edwards and Geoff Allan, while visiting the fields in the lower Mekong basin, found that the farmers are carrying out studies to find out the cheapest foods and feeding strategy on their own. Reviewing the situation of fish feeds and feeding in the lower Mekong basin they report that high cost of commercial feeds is the main issue raised by the farmers. Therefore, they recommend more research towards it.

At the same time, Peter Edwards writes about traditional Chinese aquaculture that is based on the feeding with farm by-products and manuring the ponds. He claims that it is more sustainable and has good potential even outside China.

Commercial-scale aquaculture is also becoming important in this region due to increasing domestic and export market. Ram Bhujel emphasizes the role of lipids and essential fatty acids, which are recently considered the most important nutrients for reproduction, on commercial fry production.

AARM's role is not limited to doing research itself but also extended to helping others do the same. Amrit Bart writes about the involvement of AARM with SUFER project in Bangladesh that supported research and education. The project sent several faculty members to study at AIT, established a fish nutrition network, and reviewed and identified areas of nutrition research relevant to Bangladesh. During the training and workshops AARM assisted in writing competitive proposals.

As usual, this issue also covers our on-going outreach activities including the activities of ITCZM. Harvey, Henrik, Shahadat and Arlene describe field visits, meetings, workshops and conferences with various partner institutions, officials and funding agencies. In addition, other topics such as impacts of fish-ponds on livelihood and exotic fish species in SE Asia are also included in this issue.

Ram Bhujel