

FISH TIDINGS

AN UPDATE ON THE IAASL PROJECT IN THE LOWVELD

The PRP Integrated Agriculture Aquaculture for Sustainable Livelihoods (IAASL) project has steadily taken off the ground with mobilization and sensitization meetings having been successfully conducted in both districts (Masvingo and Chivi). Identification of beneficiaries and recommendation and adoption of sites for pond construction has been largely successful and due credit is hereby given to our stakeholders namely the department of livestock production (DLPD), the department of agriculture extension (Agritex), Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and the Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZNPWMA).

This lead story is prepared in fulfilment of Aquaculture Zimbabwe's mandate to disseminate and share project progress information with all stakeholders as accredited above and our utmost acknowledgement that this initiative would be a pipe dream without their consultation and consent. Credit is also given to community leadership structures for successfully coordinating a smooth entry into the districts and wards identified for project activities. What follows is an outline of what successes and challenges the IAASL project has met since its inception in July 2011.

The period under review has generally been stable given that AZ op-



IAASL Beneficiaries Fitting an Overflow Pipe on a Fish Pond

erations have been proceeding well across the two districts of Chivi and Masvingo. The environment has largely been enabling considering the overwhelming response that the project has enjoyed since its inception. There was significant political

Inside this issue:

Bolstering Aquaculture in Zimbabwe **2**

What does it take to be a fish farmer? **2**

stability in the province with little or no major incidence of political upheaval being reported. However at the national level, There remains an air of socio-economic and political uncertainty with omni-present signs of a disintegrating GNU whose policies are constantly marred by deep sitting conflict and contradictions. Such lack of common ground has compromised food security while perpetuating poverty even at the household level. There has been very little in terms of government support to rural populations in order to improve their critical live-

lihoods situation despite a series of support schemes that never really make any impact. The onset of the rainy season brought great optimism in the province although there have been very little rains to date pointing to great uncertainty over harvests and a good crop. Most households planted cereal crops and remain hopeful that the situation improves in the short term. The productive sectors of the economy continue in a depressed mood, with little or no external inflows of financial aid to jumpstart a doddering economy. Perhaps

the onus remains on the civic society and the non-governmental fraternity to review their focus on the health and livelihoods of marginalised populations. Food availability and nutrition therefore remain critical areas warranting national, regional and global attention. Masvingo District has been successfully stocked with close to 400,000 fish while Chivi District has received close to 150,000 fish to date and the survival rates have been 99%. Beneficiary registration is now complete with a total of 500 benefiting households registered with AZ.

Bolstering Aquaculture in Zimbabwe

By SeafoodSource staff

09 January, 2012 - An effort led by New England Seafood, Zimbabwe's Lake Harvest Aquaculture and Waitrose to improve tilapia-farming practices in Africa is "progressing well," according to the UK agency Department for International Development (DID).

Partly funded by the DID's Food Retail Industry Challenge Fund (FRICH), the project is designed to help tilapia farmers in Africa enter the global tilapia supply chain and access higher-value markets like the United Kingdom. Africa produces only about 3 million metric tons of tilapia annually, a fraction of the global tilapia supply.

The project, which is still in its early stages, is a shining example of how FRICH funding is being used to bolster the food trade between Africa and Europe, according to the agency, which is now accepting bids from UK and European food companies for the next round of FRICH funding. Initial bids must be submitted by 20 February, and grants requested from FRICH must be between GBP 150,000 and GBP 1 million, with applicants contributing a minimum of 50 percent of the total project cost.

"The main objective of FRICH ... is to improve market access for African food by working with food businesses to develop successful new approaches that can be scaled up," said Mark Thomas, FRICH project director. "The funding therefore offers excellent opportunities for European food companies to test new business models with a shared risk, while benefiting some of the poorest regions of Africa in a very real and tangible way."

For tilapia farmers in Africa, the project is already paying off. UK-based supplier New England Seafood is working with Waitrose on a tilapia marketing campaign — tilapia is a relatively new species to UK consumers. New England Seafood is also working with Lake Harvest Aquaculture to improve environmental and fish welfare standards, quality assurance, freezing and handling methods and logistics among tilapia producers in Africa so that they can access the UK market.

What does it take to be a Fish Farmer ?

Fish live in a chemical, biological and physical environment and in order to manage the fish and their environment optimally you will need to master each of these parameters and then understand how they inter-relate.

Ever wondered what it takes to be a fish farmer? I bet the answer will be very different depending on who you pose the question to but it is a question that is often asked.

I believe that a fish farmer needs to be a well rounded and skilled businessman, who is willing to work long hours and often under difficult circumstances. Let me explain:

First and foremost a fish farmer must be a competent businessman. Failure to manage for the bottom line will quickly result in the business 'taking on water', 'listing' and 'sinking'! Look for ways to increase revenue whilst simultaneously cutting costs, without compromising growth rates or product quality. This includes managing cash flow, ensuring payments are received and made on time, staying on the right side of the state revenue authority requirements, managing stock levels and keeping theft under control. These tasks cannot be tackled annually but form part of the daily routine of the fish farmer. So far our hero is a financial, administrative and PR expert.

A fish farmer also needs to be able to operate independently, and to make a plan when things go wrong. The nature of things is such that many fish farms are situated remotely from other people and hardware stores, and as such, the farmer needs to be able to find a solution with what he has on hand. This correctly implies that a stock of plumbing, chemicals, tools and other support equipment is always held on fish farms, but in addition, creativity is often also required. A problem solving, open minded approach and technical competence are called for.

A successful fish farmer needs to be able to deal effectively with his staff. This

includes getting the best performance from them relative to what they cost the company, motivating them to be detail conscious, keeping them operating at a high level of excellent and doing this within a happy working environment. Our man is also a HR guru.

Fish live in a chemical, biological and physical environment and in order to manage the fish and their environment optimally you will need to master each of these parameters and then understand how they inter-relate. Furthermore, when problems arise there are times when they need to be dealt with quickly in order to curb the negative effect on the fish and prevent losses. This may not happen between 8am and 5pm, in fact it usually doesn't, and strong winds and cold rain seem to characterise the conditions under which problems most frequently occur! Under these conditions the farmer needs to correctly identify and solve the problem, requiring him to be intelligent and enquiring, willing to work long hours and able to endure adverse working conditions.

No business stands alone, we are all here to serve our customers. The fish farmer's customers require that he provides fish of a certain size, quality, consistency, volume and price on a regular basis, whilst looking around to see where he can get the best return for his products. This is done in exchange for payment. A breakdown anywhere along this process results in payment being squeezed, which negatively affects the farmers ability to produce further fish of the right size, quality, consistency and volumes and into the vicious circle

you go. Our farmer needs to be a skilled marketer as well!

The picture I have painted indicates why I feel that a fish farmer needs to be skilled on many different levels across a range of activities. If you are considering entering the industry be honest with yourself about the skills you have and those you still need to acquire. Aquaculture is not for sissies, and although you may be willing to work hard, be sure that you truly have what it takes to be a success on all fronts. It may be that you need to work under someone else for a while to hone your skills before venturing out on your own, and remember your raincoat.

Modular, Re-configurable Cages, Total Solutions for finfish Aquaculture with 20 years experience of African conditions. We now also offer HDPE plastic cages! Agents for VAKI Fish Counters, Graders and Bio Estimators, as well as WeighData processing equipment. Suppliers of blower feeders and propulsion systems for feed barges.

A&AT designs and manufactures Fish Farming Cages and Cage Nets in South Africa, servicing fish farmers throughout sub-Saharan Africa! Our systems are in use in South Africa, Namibia and Lesotho. From 6 x 6m square juvenile cages to massive 20m diameter grow-out cages and nets to your specification regarding depth and mesh size.

ray@fishfarmingcages.com

Tel: +27 72 747 1500

Fax: +27 86 556 5926

<http://www.fishfarmingcages.com>

IAASL UPDATE IN PICTURES: FEB 2012



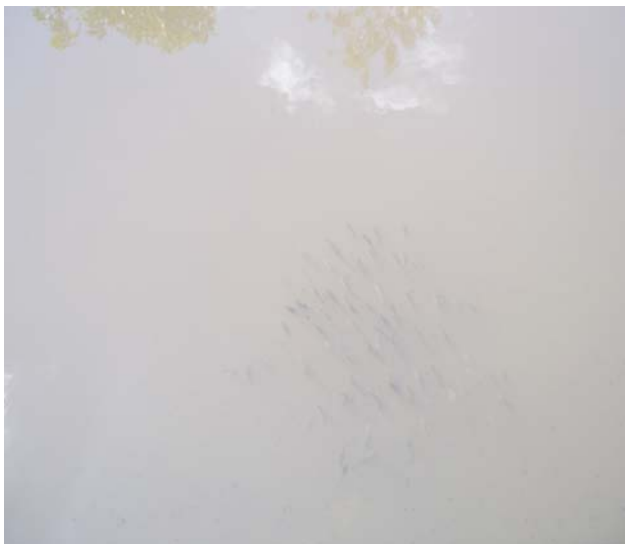
An Aquaculture Zimbabwe Field Officer demonstrating how to install a drainage pipe at Chisase Ponds in Ward 30, Masvingo District



Water Quality Testing at Nhengo Ponds, Ward 10 in Chivi District



Hands on IAASL: Beneficiaries preparing an outlet screen for their overnight storage facility at Magudu Scheme in Ward 29, Masvingo District



Recently stocked fingerlings at Masters Zhira Ponds in Ward 15, Chivi



Night time water quality monitoring in a stocked fish pond



Local livestock waste meant for pond fertilization at Dzimat Ponds, Ward 15, Chivi District

Head Office:
16 Northampton, Crescent
Eastlea
Harare
Zimbabwe

Masvingo Office:
CSC Complex
684 Factory Rd
Industrial Sites
Masvingo

Telephone:
+263 77 2881 398
+263 77 3802 355
E-mail: info@aquaculturezim.org
www.aquaculturezim.org

Aquaculture Zimbabwe Consultancy Services

At Aquaculture Zimbabwe we are pleased to advise all stakeholders that we now have a wide range of consultancy services as outlined below:

- Freshwater Aquaculture and Fisheries Feasibility Studies*
 - Fish Farm Enterprise Set Up (Pond Culture/Recirculation Aquaculture Systems/Cage Culture/etc)*
 - Crocodile Farming Feasibility Studies*
 - Crocodile Farm Set Up*
 - Fish Market Feasibility Studies*
 - Per Capita Fish Consumption Surveys By Area*
 - Communal Aquaculture and Fisheries Development*
 - Commercial Fisheries Development*
 - Fish Farming & Fisheries Trainings*
 - Research Surveys and Development Plans*
-