

Expert consultation on ecological risk assessment of genetically improved fish

As member countries move towards development and distribution of genetically improved fish, it is essential that protocols and policies for dissemination are reviewed, methods to assess the risks to biodiversity and ecology are formulated and ways and means of averting any possible risks are identified.

With financial support from the Norwegian Agency of Development Corporation (NORAD), INGA/WorldFish Center, in collaboration with Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute, is holding an 'Expert Consultation on Ecological Risk

Assessment', in conjunction with the 7th Steering Committee Meeting of INGA in Dhaka, Bangladesh in June-July 2003. The workshop will be attended by fish geneticists, genetic resource conservation experts from 13 member countries of INGA and representatives of advanced scientific institutions and international organizations. It will evaluate the potential benefits and risks of genetically improved fish breeds in member countries, develop guidelines for environmentally safe introductions of improved fish breeds and a framework for ecological risk assessment.

Genetics in aquaculture conference

Universidad de Chile announces the 'VIII International Symposium on Genetics in Aquaculture' in Puerto Varas, Chile from 9th to 15th November 2003. The symposium is being organized by the International Association for Genetics in Aquaculture (IAGA) in collaboration with the University of Chile (major sponsor), the Foundation for Agrarian Innovation and the Institute of Fisheries Development. It is expected to bring together geneticists/scientists from different regions of the world to assess the progress achieved in the area of aquaculture genetics.

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Philippine institutions establish Tilapia Science Center

Four Philippine institutions, the Freshwater Aquaculture Center and College of Fisheries of the Central Luzon State University, the Philippine Department of Agriculture's National Freshwater Fisheries Technology Center of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Phil-Fishgen and the GIFT Foundation International, Inc., that for many years have been involved in research on various aspects of tilapia aquaculture and genetics, have established the Tilapia Science Center at Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija.

All of these institutions have been at the forefront in the development and dissemination of improved strains of tilapia. Through the synergy of this unique partnership, they hope to make even more scientific and technological contributions to the Philippine tilapia industry. Initial programs identified by the Tilapia Science Center include: verification of tilapia grow-out technologies, providing laboratory diagnostic services to farmers, knowledge management systems and training/extension programs.

Training on fish molecular genetics

Through a grant from the Australian government (AusAID), Deakin University, Australia and Research Institute of Aquaculture No.1 in Hanoi, Vietnam are organizing a series of training workshops on Molecular Genetics to increase the level of awareness and skills of young researchers (mainly in Vietnam) in the application of molecular genetic approaches in fish biodiversity conservation and genetic improvement of fish for aquaculture. The first training workshop was held in July 2002. It introduced the participants to basic theory relating to application of molecular and population genetics particularly on protein-based (allozyme) and DNA-based techniques for assaying and measuring genetic variations.

As a follow-up to the first training workshop held in July 2002, a second

'Workshop on Molecular Genetics for Aquaculture and Fisheries' is being organized by Deakin University and Research Institute of Aquaculture No.1 in Hanoi, Vietnam in June-July 2003. This training will focus on practical applications of molecular genetics specifically on allozymes, RFLPs/RAPDs using agarose and SSCPs/microsatellites using acrylamide and staining.

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