

Letters to Editor

Regarding the article entitled "Trends in National Aquaculture Legislation - Part 1- published in FAN-30, December 2003, we received the following two messages. We appreciate their inputs and clarifications.

Dr M. Sakthivel, President, Aquaculture Foundation of India wrote:

Kindly refer to your article on "Trends in National Aquaculture" Part (1) published in FAN No. 30, Dec. 2003. I congratulate you for preparing this article which is informative. You have referred India in Page 12 wherein you have mentioned "Local fishers started protesting, but in 1996 the Indian Supreme Court issued a final judgment that confirmed the Notification, thereby banning all non-traditional aquaculture within 500m of the high water mark or within 1000m of lakes Chilka and Pulicat". It is not a total ban of non-traditional aquaculture. It is worked like this "The farmers who are operating traditional and improved traditional systems of aquaculture may adopt improved technology for increased production, productivity and return with prior approval of the "authority" constituted by this order". Therefore all farms, developed within 500m (Coastal Regulation Zone) are to follow improved traditional farming technology for higher production and productivity. Aquaculture Authority was established to regulate this development through a licensing system and about 6000 licences have been issued so far. To issue licence, Aquaculture Authority has set up two committees at District and State levels with representatives from Forest and Wild Life, Pollution Control Board, Fisheries, Revenue and Irrigation Departments. Of course, the litigation is still going on in the Supreme Court. Aquaculture Bill is yet to be passed in the Parliament.

Dr Yugraj Yadava, Member Secretary, Aquaculture Authority of India wrote:

Many thanks for your mail and for pointing out the anomaly in the said paragraph of the article. In fact the paragraph does not bring out the issue in its correct perspective and leads to erroneous information- e.g. The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification of 1991 has no direct reference to "aquaculture" at all. If one carefully peruses the Notification, it may be seen that all relevant references in the said Notification lead to aquaculture as a permitted activity (example - hatcheries as permitted activity within CRZ, etc.). However, the Supreme Court judgement of December 1996 interpreted shrimp farming as an industry, which does not require a water front and therefore placed restrictions on certain types of shrimp farming practices within the CRZ. Further, the 1995 Aquaculture (Regulation) Act of Tamil Nadu no longer exists, as this Act and also the Act of the West Coast State of Goa on Brackishwater Aquaculture have been superseded by the 1996 judgement of the Apex Court. I feel such articles should be fully factual (if possible reviewed) so as to disseminate the correct picture. It is all the more important in matters, which are in the process of judicial review.