

TCP/URU/3101: Plan Nacional de Desarrollo de la Acuicultura

In September 2006, FAO started a Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) project in Uruguay to support the sustainable development of aquaculture in the country. The project has as main objective to help the Government of Uruguay, through its Dirección Nacional de Recursos Acuáticos (DINARA), in its efforts to increase the institutional- and human capacity of DINARA by means of an integrated planning process for the sector and some targeted capacity building interventions.

Over a period of some 18 months the project will develop a national aquaculture policy, an aquaculture strategy and an implementation programme for the strategy. Staff of DINARA will be trained in planning and policy formulation as well as some technical and economic aspects of aquaculture. Moreover, some 50 aquaculturists will receive training courses in those issues that need most attention (including economic feasibility analysis, marketing, culture system development and maintenance, and reproduction of certain species). The project will also develop together with some aquaculturists demonstration activities in blue mussel *Mytilus edulis platensis* and pejerrey *Odontesthes bonariensis* culture. It is hoped that the public-private partnerships developed under the project for the promotion of these two species will increase knowledge at national level of their culture and trigger interests from others.



Can of caviar from Esturiones del Río Negro S.A.

ESTURIONES DEL RÍO NEGRO S.A.

In order to guarantee that the aquaculturists in Uruguay will benefit from the project interventions on both the production and marketing aspects, the project has issued a contract with the Centre for Marketing Information and Advisory Services for Fishery Products in Latin America and the Caribbean (INFOP-ESCA), which has its headquarters in Montevideo, Uruguay. International experts

from (Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Spain and Universidad Marista de Mérida, México) are being contracted at present to assist FAO in the provision of the technical assistance.

The aquaculture sector in Uruguay can be regarded as still in its infancy stage. Apart from a commercial sturgeon *Acipenser spp.* farm (Esturiones Del Río Negro S.A.) which was established in 1995 and shows a continuous growth, there is very limited aquaculture being developed in Uruguay at present. Currently cultured species include black catfish, bullfrog, Australian crayfish, common and grass carps, tilapia and various ornamental freshwater fish species. The total aquaculture production, according to available statistics, was less than 100 tonnes per year in recent years. The fact that the population can be considered as "meat lovers" by tradition, together with the low domestic market prices for beef, pork, lamb and chicken, and the wide availability of fish marine fisheries in the capital, makes it a real challenge to develop aquaculture in Uruguay.



New production facilities of Esturiones del Rio Negro S.A., where sturgeon is being produced for caviar



Female sturgeon with caviar



Some fish tanks used for experiments at the Instituto de Investigaciones Pesqueras, Universidad de la Republica, Montevideo, Uruguay

Nevertheless, the success of this US\$ 260 000 technical assistance project is already somehow guaranteed by the Government of Uruguay. The Government is initiating, with support from the World Bank, GEF and FAO, a fisheries sector development project of over 6 million US\$, which will include an aquaculture component as well. The aquaculture component of this sectoral development project will contribute to the implementation of the national aquaculture strategy to be developed by this TCP project.

For more information on this project, please contact:

Raymon van Anrooy
 FAO, Ankara, Turkey
 E-mail: Raymon.vanAnrooy@fao.org
 Rohana Subasinghe
 Aquaculture Management and Conservation Service (FIMA)
 FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, Rome
 E-mail: Rohana.Subasinghe@fao.org or
 Heimo Mikkola
 FAO Representative in Uruguay
 E-mail: FAO-UY@fao.org

Workshop on "Building an Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture: initial steps for guidelines" will bring together an international group of 20 experts whom will analyze present evidence, availability of knowledge and tools in order to agree on concepts, principles, scale approaches and further requirements to elaboration of guidelines for EAA. The workshop will be held at the University of Isles Balears in Mallorca, Spain during the week of May 6 of 2007. Further information may be obtained via e-mail: Doris.Soto@fao.org