

SPC TRAINING BOOSTS FIJI'S FRY PRODUCTION

Fiji's tilapia hatcheries and commercial fish farmers are now reporting significant success, thanks to collaborative work involving the skilled and trained government extension officers and farmers.

Regional cooperation in training is becoming more necessary for aquaculture development success. Training provided to seven Fiji government extension officers during the recent SPC coordinated training programme has contributed to improved tilapia broodstock management, increased tilapia fry production, and commercial farm growth.

The good news is that the effort to increase Fiji's tilapia fry production through training in broodstock management and rearing techniques has paid off, and private hatcheries that were previously dormant are now being revived and are fully operational.

Naduruloulou Station now has more than 50,000 tilapia fry, and in the recent past, the station distributed over 500,000 fry to farmers in the Central and Western Divisions. Quality brooders were also distributed to private hatcheries.

The progress on the selection of GIFT tilapia and *Macrobrachium rosenbergii* for future broodstock is encouraging. The station's Broodstock Management Unit leader, Maleli Dawai, said, "The efforts are now pursued to ensure improvement in growth and fecundity performances of the selected brooders".

The station is expected to have in stock 9000 future tilapia brooders and 3000 *M. rosenbergii*. The Freshwater Aquaculture Sector is

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expecting to produce 2.07 million tilapia fry from the government hatcheries, 0.69 million fry from the private sector, and about 2.75 million *M. rosenbergii* postlarvae by the end of this year.

Manasa Tumuri, an SPC-trained extension officer in the Cakaudrove Province on Fiji's second largest island reported, "There is a strong supply of tilapia fry and fingerlings now being produced at the Savusavu Montfort Technical Institute."

The institute's hatchery was established when the Dreketi Government Hatchery was closed in 2000. After its first year of operation the hatchery was closed due to a lack of technical support, funds and other resources.

However, soon after the SPC training in May 2004, Manasa said, "...a collective effort between the Fisheries Department, SPC and the Savusavu Montfort Institute resulted in the reviving of the Institute's hatchery."

Arrangements were made to have the brooders, water pump and accessories, netting materials, feeds and lime shipped from the Naduruloulou Station.

Today new fry and fingerlings are continuously produced and separate from the brooders at the Institute's tilapia hatchery.

The Savusavu Montfort ponds and the fish farms in the Cakaudrove Province contain quality fry once again. Manasa

in his challenging words said, "Fiji and the Pacific BEWARE. — Expect truly quality and gourmet healthy St Peter's Fish coming out from the Hidden Paradise."

Alsake Vana, an SPC training programme participant from the Coral Coast, reported, "The land for the Sigatoka Government Tilapia Hatchery has been finalized and plans are being pursued to construct the hatchery building before the year ends."

The Naduruloulou Station hatchery team has completed the initial fact-finding exercise in establishing the hatchery, and the NRS Station Manager Jone Vasuca reported, "That they would need about FJD 3000 for this project."

Meanwhile, the fish farms in the Sigatoka area continue to receive their fry stock from the Naduruloulou Station. Alsake is expecting increased production and economic growth in the Nadroga/Navosa Provinces once the hatchery is fully operational. He said that he wants to, "prove to the communities that fish farming can be a lucrative and healthy business, as compared to the narcotic "killer" weed farming secretly practiced in the area."

Laisani Baleinacagi, our SPC training participant from the Serua/Namosi Provinces, is currently involved in the community consultation on the establishment of a 20-ha tilapia farm on an indigenous land formerly used for rice farming. This is one of the land resource bases identified in the Freshwater Aquaculture Sector's Strategic Development Plan for 2006–2014. Laisenia said, "He is going to showcase this Vunaniu Indigenous Aquaculture Project as a positive way forward of utilizing unused rice paddies for tilapia farming."

Maleli Dawai reported that the Driti Project is progressing well. The recently harvested 2.6 tonnes

with a market value of about FJD 9100. The hatchery has been upgraded and is now fully operational. The village women are planning to increase their farm size, because the hatchery is producing more than what the existing ponds can store.

Similarly, the Ba Government Hatchery is showing encouraging fry production results under the capable hands of Eloni Takali and Shashi. The hatchery has been renovated and new brooders were supplied from Naduruloulou Station. The hatchery is producing more than enough fry to comfortably

cater to farmers' need in the Western Division. Eloni said, "Given more financial support from government, they can produce billions of fry because they have the warm climatic condition needed, and he had acquired the necessary knowledge through the recent SPC training".



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