MEDIA RELEASE

Recirculating technology a key part of future aquaculture

Technology that reduces water consumption by around 98 per cent is a key feature of new recirculating systems now available to the global aquaculture industry, according to an aquaculture specialist speaking before this week's Australasian Aquaculture Conference 2012 conference in Melbourne.

Professor Thomas M Losordo, who presented at the Aquaculture Recirculating Technology Short-Course at the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT), said such technology must be part of the future for the rapidly growing aquaculture industry.

With the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reporting that more 50 per cent of the world's food fish consumption now comes from aquaculture, it is essential that such environmentally friendly technologies are embraced as demand increases for the world's fastest-growing source of animal protein.

Professor Losordo, from the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University in the United States of America, said recirculating technology is part of the answer for the aquaculture industry, however it is not the only answer.

"We are not immediately going to be moving all aquaculture that's in the ocean on to the land," said Professor Losordo, who believes water re-use technology is important, especially for a dry country like Australia.

He said the idea of using water and then re-using it for irrigation purposes makes a lot of sense.

"We have been able to get to a point in technology where the water that goes out of the system is basically environmentally benign," he said. "You can't just create a recirculating system – you have to create the recirculating system with waste treatment."

"Treating waste from a tank-based recirculating system is much easier than treating waste coming out of a large pond system or even a net pen system,"

said Professor Losordo. "However, if it is not done correctly, all it is doing is concentrating the waste into a single discharge."

"If you don't treat that waste or re-use the waste water the recirculation system isn't green.

"If you do incorporate into your design waste treatment, then you can locate on a stream, a creek or a marsh and have no impact on that environment at all."

Australasian Aquaculture Conference 2012, which is being held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, concludes Friday 4 May.

Over 1000 delegates from around the world are attending the conference and associated trade show and workshops/meetings and it is the biennial event of the National Aquaculture Council of Australia and the World Aquaculture Society-Asia Pacific Chapter.

Facts

- Approximately 30 people, which included overseas participants, attended the Recirculating Technology Short-Course at NMIT
- Around 2000 have participated in this course across Australia in the past 10 to 12 years.
- The FAO's World Aquaculture 2010 report found that global production of fish from aquaculture grew more than 60 per cent between 2000 and 2008, from 32.4 million tonnes to 52.5 million tonnes.

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