

FISH HEALTH AND QUALITY IN AQUACULTURE

Pereira, F.

CIMAR, Rua dos Bragas, 289, 4050-123 Porto, Portugal

The final objective in aquaculture is animal production in controlled conditions. The global production is constantly growing, and Portugal follows this rule. In our country we can already find several species cultivated, whether innate or introduced. In spite of financial difficulties, the number of fish farms has also been growing.

The production of the maximum number of individuals, in the smallest space, and in the shortest time is, in summary, the cause of technological evolution and production intensification in aquaculture.

Such concentrations of fish are perfect vectors for epizootic events. This is due to the presence of different pathogenic organisms which in normal conditions would have minimum expression. In this situation their transmission is highly likely to occur.

In order to avoid fish mortalities due to pathogens, almost 30% of the annual investment in aquaculture is applied in sanitary measures. This includes fish disease diagnosis and correct treatment.

The animal production sector has been feeling difficulties, due to recent news published in the media. Urgent measures have to be taken in order to guarantee food security.

Recently was created in Portugal the “Agência para a Qualidade Alimentar (Food Quality Agency)”. This Agency exists to discuss public health issues concerning food quality.

“From the farm to the fork” is the EU criteria to the control of food quality, and “Traceability” the best weapon.