

Sustainable Aquaculture Feed

Why is this important?

Aquaculture is a vibrant and rapidly expanding sector which already accounts for almost half of global seafood production. However, expansion brings challenges and ensuring that the feeds used in aquaculture are obtained from sustainable fisheries has become a significant issue for the industry. There are many examples of how feed sustainability has become a real consideration for the aquaculture, for instance:

- Many aquaculture certifications have introduced conditions relating to feed – for instance GAA, Aquaculture Stewardship Council and Global Gap
- Some retailers have adopted procurement policies in relation to the feed used for aquaculture products, e.g. Sainsbury's in the UK
- Some major aquaculture producers have adopted voluntary measures through corporate responsibility programmes to ensure the sustainability of feeds, e.g. some leading players in the farmed salmon sector
- There is a perceived reputational risk for all parts of the supply chain through the use of unsustainable marine resource in feeds, e.g. the use of vulnerable or threatened species in shrimp feed

The aquaculture industry is already responding to the challenge of sustainable feeds but there is much still to be done.

What's the issue?

The fishmeal and fish oil used in aquaculture feeds are derived from three main sources:

- Small pelagic fisheries in the North East Atlantic (such as Blue Whiting and herring)
- Small pelagic fisheries around South America (such as the Peruvian anchovy – the largest reduction fishery in the world)
- Fisheries in Asia which rely on either small pelagics or so called 'trash fish'

Each of these has challenges to overcome to become sustainable sources of fishmeal and fish oil:

- North East Atlantic - the fish stocks have not always been healthy (the Blue Whiting stock has experienced a particularly dramatic decline) and there is still a need to improve the quality of management for some species
- South America – some stocks are very healthy (for instance Peruvian anchovy) but others are not well managed. The Chilean Jack Mackerel is an example of a fishery that is in poor condition and needs better management.
- South East Asia – the fisheries used for fishmeal in Asia are either small pelagic stocks (for instance, the Bali Sardinella) which are poorly defined and managed or



from 'trash fish'. 'Trash fish' is the term used to describe the wide variety of species caught in trawl fisheries that are not used for direct human consumption. Trash fish fishing can be highly damaging and include catches of threatened or endangered species.

What is SFP doing about sustainable aquaculture feeds?

Because of concerns around the sustainability of source fisheries for aquaculture feeds, SFP has undertaken a number of projects to assist the supply chain:

- Many of the key fisheries supplying fishmeal and oil are profiled on FishSource (www.fishsource.org) – the SFP fisheries database
- SFP is creating Fishery Improvement Projects to enhance the management of some key reduction fisheries
- SFP is an active partner in the creation of the International Fishmeal and Fish Oil Organization's 'Improver Programme' for fishmeal producers that cannot yet achieve the RS standard

SFP also coordinates the Small Pelagics Sustainable Suppliers Roundtable which is primarily for producers and users of fishmeal and fish oil which includes companies that process and retail aquaculture products as well as producers themselves. The roundtable provides the following services to participants:

- A systematic overview of the sustainability of fisheries that are important to the fishmeal and fish oil sector
- A regular briefing on emerging sustainability issues in the sector that may impact on supply, certification, corporate reputation and other areas important to the seafood industry
- An opportunity to discuss matters of common interest, develop industry positions on emerging issues and engage in Fisheries Improvement Projects for key fisheries

The roundtable is split into two separate groups in order to provide better focus and relevance in information provision:

1. those most concerned with reduction fisheries in the Atlantic and around South America
2. those most concerned with reduction fisheries in Asia

It is possible to belong to both groups.

Get involved

SFP invites all parts of the aquaculture supply chain to get involved in finding solutions to the challenge of sustainable aquaculture feed. You can find out more at the SFP web site or by contacting: Blake Lee Harwood, blake.lee-harwood@sustainablefish.org.