

THE EXPERIENCES OF A MILKFISH FARMER

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Private Sector**

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I started on fish culture in May 1964. Then, the technology known to fishpond operators was the growing of lumot. The only fertilizer used was chicken droppings and stocking rate per hectare was very low.

In 1965, BFAR, then Bureau of Fisheries, through Dr. Tang, a Taiwanese, introduced the lablab culture. Aside from chicken droppings, inorganic fertilizers like ammonium sulphate and 16-20-0 were used. Endrin was used as pesticide. Since tobacco dust was still available, we also used this as pesticide. Why? We don't know, but it was effective and we appreciated the results. Due to language problem, the fishpond operators were rather hesitant in absorbing the technology being introduced by the Bureau, but because of good results, the operators became interested and the Federation was formed with Dr. Sanglay as its first president.

Dr. Smithou and Dr. Grover of the USAID came to the Philippines and gave a series of seminar-workshops in cooperation with the U.P. College of Fisheries. The Seminar-Workshops were so effective that every fishpond operator took notice. Here, the new layout which was later called the modular system was introduced. Plankton was taught. These new technologies were put to practice by operators and the stocking rate rose to 1500-2500 per hectare and later some operators here in Panay were stocking as much as 5000 per hectare, as Dr. Tang envisioned.

By now many agencies started to do research on aquaculture. These are BFAR, U.P., NSDB, USAID, PCARR and private sector. The SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department was organized. All agencies started to release the results of their research but the results reaches only few operators, so transfer of technology was ineffective. Language was still the problem. Results could not be understood by the operators especially explanations using scientific and technical terminologies.

BFAR made the results easy to be assimilated by using language understood in their areas, in other words, plain layman's language. Production zoomed to a record high but shortage of fry supply began to be felt. SEAFDEC claims a breakthrough in the artificial spawning of sabalo but until now we do not know whether it really can solve fry shortage and when.

PCARR gave a seminar-workshop at Legaspi and there the private sector brought out the problem on engineering and its importance. U.P. included engineering in its curriculum. PCARR made researches in engineering. To the private operators, engineering spells the success or failure of their venture.

With the increase in production came the following problems:
(1) financing, (2) marketing, (3) transportation, (4) processing.

During the later part of 1978 NSDB called a meeting for project evaluation. In that meeting, the private sector suggested to U.P. and NSDB to study the length of time needed for a finished area to earn sufficiently for the operator to be able to start paying his loans so that the banks can determine the length of grace period to be given. This can help make paying of loans more realistic.

With the help of all these agencies, the production required of the industry for the year 2000 can hopefully be met.