



## FISH FARMING

IN CATALONIA WE ARE AT PRESENT CARRYING OUT IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS IN OUR FISH FARMING PROGRAMME, AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE FOR THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC FUTURE OF HAVING NEW PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES.

EDELMIR SALICHS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SEA FISHERIES

**S**ince 1984-85, when mussel cultivation got under way in Catalonia with the establishment of a hundred mussel beds at Badies del Fangar and Els Alfacs, in the Ebro Delta, it has developed in such a way that all these installations are now operating at full capacity, with an annual production of over 5 million kilos of mussels.

This initial project has contributed considerably to the climate which has made it possible for Catalonia, two years later, to be undergoing important developments in her fish farming programme, cultivating those species which are technically more viable and commercially more profitable.

The Catalan fisheries administration has wanted to stimulate these developments, in the awareness of the value to our economic future of a new productive activity which will not only cover the needs of an increasingly deficient market as regards supplies of live and transformable products, but will also be of use in the development of certain deprived coastal areas, provide an al-

ternative for those sectors of the fishing population affected by the reconversion of the fleet, and offer a new option with an extremely favourable outlook for those individuals or organizations who are interested in investing in this sector. Luckily, in spite of the apparently spectacular development of sea farming in the area of the Ebro Delta, particularly the cultivation of shell-fish, with the installation of 160 mussel beds, the use of long-line oyster-fattening beds at Ampolla and Les Cases d'Alcanar, and the cultivation of clams, the fact is that the whole process, and especially the cultivation of fish and crustaceans, has been approached with caution, to ensure above all that the viability of these projects is not conditioned by the difficulties involved.

It is important to point out one important characteristic, which is the diversity of species and of the installations and systems used. In this way we can be sure of covering the shortages in supplies of marine species to both the national market and the countries of the

EEC, while at the same time guaranteeing continuity in certain types of culture. At present, as well as the cultivation of bivalves, oysters, mussels and clams, now being consolidated, we are busy working on the pre-fattening and fattening of sea-perch, gilt-head, mullet and crayfish in the Bay of Roses, the Maresme and the Ebro Delta, with a total investment at present exceeding 4,000 million pesetas.

The use of floating cages for fattening gilt-head, the exploitation of lagoons and large areas of land for intensive, semi-intensive and extensive systems of cultivation, with projects promoted by private enterprise or in association with professional fishermen or by groups made up only of fishermen, and the development on the part of the *Generalitat's* "Direcció General de Pesca Marítima" of a National Plan for oyster, scallop and elver is the most effective contribution it can make to the promotion and consolidation of fish farming in Catalonia as one of the most promising economic activities for the future. ●