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RESEARCH REPORTS

SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE FOR A SECURE FUTURE

Title: Markets for tilapia (*Oreochromis sp.*) in Nicaragua: a descriptive analysis of restaurants, supermarkets and stands in open markets

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Abstract: No marketing studies, either qualitative or quantitative, have been done on the potential to develop a domestic market for farm-raised tilapia in Nicaragua. Domestic markets would provide stability by offering additional market alternatives that reduce risks associated with one target market. A comprehensive study was conducted in Nicaragua of potential buyers of farm-raised tilapia: restaurants, supermarkets, and open-stands market vendors. Three survey instruments designed for marketing studies in Honduras were used as a basis for the Nicaraguan studies. Approximately 20% of the restaurant managers, 66% of the stands in open-air markets, and 23% of the supermarkets sold tilapia. Restaurants, supermarkets, and open market vendors generally had positive attitudes towards tilapia. In the Northwest region, few people were familiar with tilapia. In the South-Central region, people had positive attitudes toward tilapia, but were afraid of contamination of tilapia from Lake Managua. It may be important for tilapia growers to differentiate farm-raised from wild-caught tilapia. According to the managers interviewed, consumers perceive tilapia as a freshwater fish caught in a polluted lake, and are unaware of the advantages of a high quality farm-raised fish. Tilapia farms and processors in Nicaragua will need to guarantee and ensure the flavor, quality, and safety of their product and promote these attributes. Broad-based consumer education and labeling programs may be needed to assist consumers to differentiate between farm-raised and wild-caught tilapia.

This abstract was based on the original paper, which was published in D. Meyer (Editor), 6to. Simposio Centroamericano de Acuicultura Proceedings: Tilapia Sessions, 22-24 August 2001. Tegucigalpa, Honduras, pp. 87-91.

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