



Grobest Times

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IMPORTS...FRIEND OR FOE?



FRESH SEAFOOD MARKET IN KAOHSIUNG, TAIWAN, DECEMBER 2008

Is it really the seafood imports Australian fish farmers should be worried about, or are they just a distraction to the true opposition?



...IMPORTS

The ABFA held its annual half yearly meeting in Cairns in February, and one of the topics that was spoken about was the issue of imported seafood, and how farmers need to establish a tactic of defense to retain market share.

Since this meeting we have begun to notice a lot of television ads promoting not imported seafood but local caught or wild catch seafood, most importantly wild caught Barramundi. These ads were well put together and I would guess was used to promote barramundi in a time where catches have been up and would be able to maintain a higher price due to stronger demand from their advertising.

A similar market ploy is used successfully by the Australian mushroom growers, who through their association monitor supply and demand of their product Australia wide and adjust their advertising accordingly without driving down prices. In our experience of being importers of feed, we know that when the local supply can't satisfy the market, an alternative such as imports is sort. The niche will always be filled somehow.

So are the importers the real threat to market share here? Or could it be that the real market victors are the wild catch crew. Has the distraction of imported fish paved a way for wild catch barramundi to capture or retain the market.

Remembering that the wild catch season runs for 9 months and is closed over the Christmas period it only leaves 3 months of the year wild catch free, and obviously prices over the Christmas period tends to rise as there is very little, or no competition in the fresh market, the remaining 9 months is up for grabs between the three sources of fish.

Another example of a television advertising victory is of course the lamb industry. When Sam Kenkovich sat in front of a camera and told Australians to buy lamb on Australia day, they did, and in record numbers! Lamb has now secured itself as the "Aussie" thing to eat on that day. Admittedly I still eat prawns on Australia day, and fish and prawns on Good Friday.

Recently published in a national newspaper was damning evidence of excessive consumption of red meat which has been linked to increased risk of early age—related Macular Degeneration (AMD). It was reported that within the study group of 6734 people across Melbourne, aged between 58 and 69, an association between AMD was found in the 25% of the group who ate red meat at least 10 times a week. This is the type of publicity groups such as the ABFA and the AAQ should pounce on and use....

FRESH SEAFOOD IN TAIWAN MARKET



FRESH SEAFOOD IN AUSSIE SUPERMARKET





...FRIEND OR FOE

...when demand has fallen and the prices are low. Instead of blaming imports, talking in circles and complaining of low prices we should be using the abundant health benefits of eating fresh fish to create a greater demand for our product, therefore a higher price. Costs associated with production such as labor, feed, electricity and fuel will rarely go down, but consumables ALWAYS go up.

S o w h a t a b o u t B a r r a m u n d i d a y ?
With such a great marketing name as Barramundi, it could be tweaked and marketed on just about any days of the week, every week. Imported frozen fish will always be here so long as the market is not satisfied, and at present is more expensive for consumers due to our under valued dollar. This seems like a perfect time to reinvent Australian Farmed Barramundi as premium priced table fish.

Catalyst Aquaculture and Grobest brings you....

PondBac© Aquaculture Water Treatment

Did you know that the largest group of animals in your pond, certainly in numbers and sometimes in biomass, are the microbes, that is the bacteria and fungi. Now most of these are actually good guys, they break down the wastes produced by the animals, any uneaten feed (hopefully not much) and any dead algae, molts (from prawns or crayfish) or dead animals.

Sometimes there are some bad guys The really bad guys are called primary pathogens, or primary disease causing agents. These are the ones that will cause disease in your animals even if they are generally healthy. Primary pathogens are sometimes introduced with new stock or by the use of live food or by visiting wildlife.

The other group of bad guys or disease agents are the secondary/opportunistic organisms. These are the ones that take advantage of your animals when they are stressed because of poor water quality or poor pond bottom conditions, or low dissolved oxygen. They can result in shell infections, skin infections, tail rot and the like. Secondary infections due to water quality or poor pond bottom conditions are the most common disease events in any aquaculture enterprise.

How to Ensure the Good Guys Win Every Time!!

In an ideal pond situation the pond ecosystem is nicely in balance and pond wastes are broken down and made available as nutrients to the algae which then re-use them to produce more algae to further soak up the wastes and so on.

The aim is to maintain good stable conditions in the pond and for the animals to be happy and growing. The good bacteria look after all this and at the same time out compete the bad guys, the secondary disease causing bacteria. The good guys also minimize the activities of the primary pathogens by keeping conditions in the pond 'nicely in balance'.

When things are 'nicely in balance' good profitable crops of healthy animals result. Pond bottoms are clear, FCRs are good, animals are clean.

Sometimes this cycle doesn't work as smoothly as desired and wastes accumulate too quickly. This may occur due to a power outage, or over feeding or over stocking. Water quality deteriorates, pond bottom conditions deteriorate, ammonia and nitrite levels quickly peak, dissolved oxygen levels.....

....New Product “PondBac®” continues

...quickly dive. Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD, the amount of oxygen required to break down the accumulated wastes) becomes excessively high. All situation dangerous to your animals, and to your pocket.

In these types of situations a bacterial additive treatment program can assist in correcting a problem or more importantly in helping prevent a problem from developing in the first place. Where crop demands are high (high stocking levels) a bacterial additive program is a useful management tool in preventing serious problems from developing. It is also a useful preventative tool in a low water exchange situation especially where water is being recycled/reused through a water treatment pond on the farm.

As always, you must correct any mechanical problems first, for example poor or inadequate aeration levels. No amount of any treatment additive is going to correct for insufficient oxygen!

Combining our considerable experience in two related water areas Aquaculture and Wastewater we now offer a line of bacterial additive products specifically tailored for the Aquaculture market. These are based on selected Bacillus species of bacteria we import from the United States under AQIS Permit for formulation here in Australia. Presently these are available as a liquid formulation suitable for spraying into ponds, inlet channels or into wastewater treatment ponds or lagoons. A granular product suitable for feed blower dispersal which will suit some farmers for pond treatment, pond pre-treatment or sludge remediation will also be available. Please contact Andrew at Grobest for details.

PondBac® LAQ (Liquid) and PondBac® GAQ (Granular)

PondBac is a blend consisting of naturally-occurring, scientifically selected (but not genetically manipulated) microbes formulated to accelerate decomposition and digestion of excess nutrients including ammonia, nitrites, nitrates, phosphates, urea and fecal matter in aquaculture and ponds. PondBac is a blend of six facultative anaerobic microbial cultures making this product effective across a wide range of substrates and environmental conditions. The microbes in PondBac are strictly saprophytic and digest only non-living and dead materials. Use of PondBac in conjunction with aeration reduces BOD and COD to acceptable levels. PondBac does not directly affect the population of in the ponds, instead the PondBac blend of microbes feed on and reduce the amount of waste materials thus creating a healthier environment. PondBac also reduces the amount of pathogens that may have also fed on the waste material by competitive displacement. PondBac microbial cultures are extremely effective in producing much healthier and larger yields in typical aquaculture operations, provided that a good supply of dissolved oxygen and ideal feeding conditions for aquaculture are maintained.

What is in These Bacterial Treatment Additives?

Good question. Some treatment additives only contain enzymes, some derived from bacteria, some synthetic. Enzymes are what bacteria produce to help them digest their food (the ‘wastes’ you hope to get rid of). Products that contain only enzymes however tackle only part of the problem, the wastes are part digested, but not broken down, BOD levels remain high.

Our products contain bacteria that produce their own enzymes the bacteria then continue on to finish the process and actually reduce BOD and COD (Chemical Oxygen Demand) by converting waste to bacterial biomass with the only end products being carbon dioxide, water and nitrogen gas.



..Importantly, our products are stabilized live cultures, that do not require activation or incubation but are ready to use, yet can be safely stored on the shelf in a cool shady place for up to 2 years for the Liquid (5 years Granular). They do not need to be refrigerated.

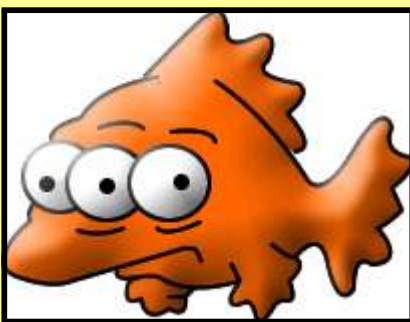
What Can I Use it For?

Can be used as a regular application in prawn ponds direct into the grow out pond or in the water treatment pond as part of a water re-use strategy. Can be used the same way in red claw or yabbie ponds. Where maintenance of good pond bottom conditions is important for crustaceans aquaculture, application directly into the grow out pond is recommended. The Bacillus species in the product are Euryhaline, that is they will grow in fresh and salt water conditions.

For fish grow out applications (freshwater and marine) application direct into either the grow out pond or wastewater reuse dam is recommended.

Treatment of pond bottoms prior to harvest to reduce sludge volumes is highly recommended. Applications should be made at the initial application level, rather than the maintenance level.

For more information on application rates, withholding periods, prices and availability please call us on our free call number **1800 005 434** or visit our products page at www.grobest.com.au



CONTROLS OF CHEMICALS IN AQUACULTURE

Due to the recent publicity surrounding the finding of a large number of two headed bass at a fish Hatchery on the Noosa river adjacent to a Macadamia nut farm, the Aquaculture Association of QLD has posted information regarding the use of chemicals in Aquaculture on their website.

Although abnormalities such as multiple heads do occur naturally in the wild, the cause in this case is now being investigated by the DPI & Fisheries to determine whether chemicals were responsible. Members of the AAQ's safe food program have their product tested for all chemical residue and has had a 100% clearance rate. Farmers should be aware of the protocols required in using chemicals on their livestock. Visit www.aaq.com.au for more information.



A TASTE OF TAIWAN

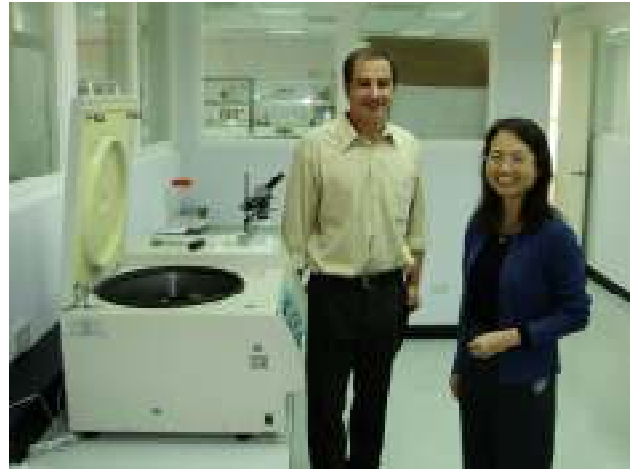


Late last year Andrew Bray of Grobest and David McNamara of Cairns Fresh Seafood traveled to Taiwan to see the latest in feed technologies and Asian farming skills. After arriving in Taipei they, along with their guide Angela Ko of Grobest Taiwan, traveled by high speed train to Kaohsiung where they visited the Grobest processing plant. Here they process approximately 8-10 ton per day of live Tilapia into fillets for export to China, the USA and numerous countries around the world. The Taiwanese facility buys the tilapia from Grobest feed customers as they are guaranteed superior quality fish, and also helps support their clientele.

After an informative meeting with the processing and plant managers they were shown around a barramundi hatchery. After realizing their country of origin the farm owner proudly ran off and returned with a number of buckets with "Aussie" fish splashing within. A good size silver perch and sleepy cod were gleefully displayed. Originally imported from Australia the farmer now breeds his own fish along with the barramundi.



Silver Perch Bred in Taiwan Hatchery



The new Grobest research lab in Taiwan



Live receiving area of the Grobest Processing plant



Premium quality Japanese Sea Bass

Day two saw them visiting a very large Japanese Sea Bass farm, which produces approx 7000 ton per year of this premium table fish with the majority of the product being exported to Japan. The flesh of this fish is very white with an excellent texture. Farming the Japanese Sea Bass gives a high yielding crop at 70-80 kg per M3, relatively fast growing considering the temperatures of Southern Taiwan, and fetches high prices with considerable demand.

From here Andrew and David dropped in on another Grobest customer, this time a barramundi grow-out farm. Run basically by the owner along he produces 400 ton per year, averaging an FCR of 1:1. Although help arrives at harvest time the farmer hand feeds all his ponds himself every day, has no other staff and often taking 3-4 hours per feed every day.

On the final day the two had a meeting at the new multi-million dollar R & D centre just outside the capital of Taipei. Here Grobest work on diet's and formulations of ever increasingly complicated and always improving Aquatic feeds. From there the results are passed onto the Grobest group's mills which are found throughout Asia, including the Jakarta mill from where Grobest Australia source most of their finished feeds.



The High Cost of SUBSTITUTION

As the Australian dollar falls and the cost of ingredients increases, it might be tempting for some feed companies to substitute fish oil and fish meal with ingredients such as chicken fat oil and canola oil as well as the standard ingredients such as rendered animal by products.. To some this may seem like a good idea, but to Grobest it's not an option.

Apart from strict quarantine regulations which prohibit imported feed from containing these ingredients Grobest maintains it's strict EU certification by maintaining a feed free from all land animal byproducts, including rendered animal oils. There has been some recent reports of a number of large farms suffering significant stock losses allegedly caused from the substitution of fish oil, with chicken fat oil, which has been linked with such abnormalities as fatty liver and immune suppression disorders.

Although this appears to be an extreme case, it does raise the question of the validity of substitution. There has been a world wide push for decreased fish meal usage in fish feeds, but as most Australian manufactures use very little fish meal and oil in their feeds, should this be a focus of Australian aquaculture ? Fish meal is a well regulated industry, with strict catch quotas, and as things stand fish meal production is sustainable at current levels, and with more and more sectors begin to use less and less the price of fish meal should settle.

The absence of vital omega 3 oils in fish fed on non fish meal based diets with low usage of fish meal and oil has also been noted in a number of studies, one of which showed fish such as tilapia fed cheaper corn based feeds had little to no omega 3 fatty acids present and higher levels of omega 6 fatty acids, which has been shown to be detrimental to the human body. The study also conclude that the levels of omega 6 long chain fatty acids found in the tilapia were higher than an 80% lean hamburger, donuts and even pork bacon. (source: Wake Forest Research) http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2008-07/wfub-wfr070708.php



Crude Analysis

Protein min: 35%
Fat min: 10%
Moisture max: 10%
Ash max: 11%

Ingredients

Chilean Fishmeal
Shrimpmeal
Wheatflour
Soybean Meal
Aquamix

**GROBEST'S 'SE' FEED IS
THE ONLY DIET SPECIFIC
FEED AVAILABLE IN
AUSTRALIA FOR SILVER
AND JADE PERCH**

**NO OTHER FEED COMES
CLOSE! FREE CALL US ON**

1800 005 434 FOR MORE INFORMATION.