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Giant freshwater prawn networking, farming innovation and stock conservation

Giant freshwater prawn, *Macrobrachium rosenbergii* output from pond production has been on a declining phase for the last few years because of several issues concerning farm production and marketing. Despite some innovative farming methods like all male monosex culture adopted by various farmers towards achieving the peak output level, recurrence of several episodes of diseases together with deteriorated water quality and marketing problems adversely affected the sector. Farming of *M. rosenbergii* gained prominence in the late 1990s as the demand for prawns was increasingly felt as an alternative to the tiger shrimp, *Penaeus monodon*, the farming of which had suffered heavy losses from viral epidemics, and many legal regulations restricting production. The advantage of *M. rosenbergii* farming in promoting rural livelihood and food security is well known. The relatively less intensive farming operations and low stocking densities used, besides lower costs of production compared to marine shrimps enable this prawn to be a good choice for sustaining rural populations. Apart from the diseases, water quality and marketing issues, the recent introduction of the whiteleg shrimp, *Litopenaeus vannamei* into the market is also believed to have affected the prospects of *M. rosenbergii* because farmers tend to focus on the former as a more profitable enterprise and its farming is being expanded even to freshwater areas. Because the farming areas have reduced very much and many hatcheries have diverted to production of *P. monodon* and *L. vannamei*, there is an increased demand for the *M. rosenbergii* seed for farming in the remaining culture areas, although production issues in the hatcheries still remain unresolved. Thus, a special session to discuss about *M. rosenbergii* aquaculture and fisheries with specific objectives is to be proposed during this coming Aquaculture Summit 2016. This proposed session will specifically focuses on three objectives; i) to form an international research networking group on *M. rosenbergii*, ii) to discuss recent findings and further research directions on *M. rosenbergii* and iii) to formulated a purposed international research grant working on *M. rosenbergii* culture. The theme for this special session is "Giant Freshwater Prawn networking, farming innovation and stock conservation". Scientists, researchers, industry practitioners and academicians related to *M. rosenbergii* are expected to attend this proposed session.

Biography

Shahreza Md Sheriff has completed his PhD in 2008 from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in the field of Genetics. He is currently the Deputy Director of Institute of Tropical Aquaculture, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu and also a Lecturer in the School of Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu. He specializes in fish genetics and breeding focusing on broodstock management for genetic improvement of aquaculture species. Currently, he is working on genetic analysis on Malaysian golden arowana (*Scleropages formosus*) dan tiger grouper.

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