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Prospects of aquaculture development along the Persian Gulf coast of United Arab Emirates: Transfer of Australian aquaculture technologies to Middle East

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Most of the United Arab Emirates (UAE)'s coastline of about 1318 km lies along the Persian Gulf, with only a minor (6.82%) portion falling in the Gulf of Oman in the east. UAE / Dubai although surprised the world with its land mark marine projects like artificial islands of "Palm Jumeirah", "Palm Jebel Ali", "Deira Island" and "The World Islands" but far simpler marine and aquaculture projects like those in developed countries to raise fish in sea cages have yet to be developed here. Despite establishing a novel, unique, land-based chilled recirculation aquaculture system (RAS) of onshore pools for salmon aquaculture with a cost of USD 27 Million and a prized caviar sturgeon farm, UAE has yet to develop and exploit true potential of its aquaculture. The author recently surveyed a small portion of UAE west coast along the Persian Gulf and observed that the country is having many natural inlets and suitable sites for coastal & marine aquaculture. Considering the trade, business and investment boom witnessed by UAE during the last 2-3 decade and considering the ease, with which the new and modern technologies are imported, adopted and transferred to the country, the transfer of Australian marine aquaculture technologies can be very advantageous to the UAE fish production system. The prospects of culture of marine finfish in Open pen-sea cage aquaculture in UAE are enormous as hydrographical and farming conditions are suitable /similar to other aquaculture rich regions of the world. It is recommended that a new state of art technical facility for fish seed production and aquaculture demonstration center for sea cages of a globally established and proven aquaculture fish species like barramundi (Asian sea bass) (*Lates calcarifer*) etc. be established in UAE. Australia being the global leader in barramundi aquaculture can transfer technology and provide aquaculture leadership to emerging markets in Middle East. It is anticipated that Australian cage aquaculture technologies can be promoted on a large commercial/industrial scale in Persian Gulf coast of UAE as these waters are known to have suitable natural productivity, water quality and rearing temperatures in the area. The booming tourism industry in UAE will get a further boost by this new type of marine food production and eco-tourism. Similarly aquaculture will help reduce pressure on traditional capture fishing operations and the coastal environment and its beauty will be least affected by these operations. The paper will discuss the prospects of transfer of globally established Australian barramundi aquaculture and sea food technologies to UAE and Middle East.

Biography

Muhammad Naeem Khan presently, working as Professor of Fisheries & Aquaculture in the Department of Zoology, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. Previously, he worked as Professor & Dean, Faculty of Fisheries & Wildlife, University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan during 2003-05, Director Fisheries, Government of Pakistan during 1996-2003, Deputy Director of Fisheries from 1989-1996 and Assistant Director Fisheries from 1986-1989. He received his PhD degree in Zoology from the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada (1996), after a MSc in Zoology (1983) from University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. He has 29 years experience of aquaculture development with the Department of Fisheries, Government of Pakistan, universities & academia in Pakistan and Canada, having 35 international and 44 nationally published research publications to his credit. His work experience includes 16 years of work on warm water aquaculture in Pakistan and 5 years of research work with salmon aquaculture in British Columbia, Canada and Great Lakes of Canada during 1992-97.

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