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ABSTRACTS

ASSOCIATIVE MODELS AS STRATEGY OF PRODUCTIVE INCLUSION FOR SMALL-SCALE FISH FARMERS: STUDY CASE OF TWO ASSOCIATIONS IN IN BRAZIL

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Implementation of strategies aiming productive inclusion of small-scale farmers has received attention in recent years. The strategies for productive inclusion include any effort capable to improve the producers' performance of a supply chain, e.g. the implementation of cooperatives and producers organizations (aiming economies of scale) or initiatives of product differentiation through labels and certifications. Among these strategies, actions aiming to regroup producers in organizations (e.g. cooperatives, associations, consortia) have been highlighted.

The results of a research project developed by Embrapa Fisheries and Aquaculture in the state of Tocantins, Brazil, pointed out the need to prioritize the development of associative models for small-scale fish farms in order to improve access to the market. This article aims at to analyze successful models of small-scale fish farmers associations that could be applied not only by the Tocantins' producers, but also in other Brazilian regions (or even in other developing countries). Rather than provide models to be faithfully reproduced, the goal here is to describe the main determinant factors for the success of the two study cases.

The two selected associations produce tilapia but in different systems (collective production in cage and individual production in earthen pond). These differences have implications on the governance of the associations and therefore this study tried to identify these particularities. In the association working collectively the successful determinants are related to the effectiveness in terms of labor organization among members (24 hours intensive handling on cages) and high participatory approach in the decision making process. Concerning the association with members producing individually, the main determinants are related to market access strategies which includes the participation on governmental programs of food purchase and the construction of a fish processing plant. As a consensus for both associations, the institutional support, as well as an "incubation" stage constituted fundamental elements. In this sense, it is important to provide some sort of support to associations, especially during its deployment phase. However, regardless of how this support will be offered, it is important that members are active in this process, participating in decision making regarding the definition, planning and executions. The information presented here may contribute to public policies oriented for small-scale fish farmers' inclusion.