ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF AQUACULTURE PRODUCTION IN BRAZIL

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Aquaculture is a recent activity in Brazil and booming. The country has a number of natural and built advantages for the development of the sector, besides increasing domestic and external demand. Nevertheless, some bottlenecks persist, as the insufficiency of aggregated statistics as well as economic data at the level of aquaculture property. The quality of information is essential to the decision-making process of the producer and also to support public policies on issues such as insurance, credit, development policies, environmental licensing, research, technology transfer and technical assistance.

This paper aims to outline a profile of economic viability of aquaculture production in Brazil by collecting management information in eight selected aquaculture centers in three different states/regions of the country: Tocantins, Mato Grosso and Bahia/Pernambuco. Three fish species were considered: tilapia, tambaqui, pintado (Brazilian catfish), farmed in three production systems: earth pounds, dams and cages.

Data were collected along with fish farmers and technicians in a technical meeting held in each center by using the panel methodology. In this assembly, the local typical aquaculture farm was described and aquaculture most frequent production costs, and zoo technical coefficients were gathered in a specific spreadsheet developed for this purpose. At the end of the event, the attendants were able to check important indicators that would provide a general view of the activity in that place at that moment. Subsequently, input costs and market prices of the centers were monitored in a monthly basis, what provided inputs for intertemporal analysis in benefit of all actors in the production chain and aquaculture sector.

The results of the analysis enabled the authors to draw a comparison chart that shows the performance of economic indicators reached in aquaculture centers surveyed, which varied according to production system, intensity in the use of technology, chosen species, organization of producers, control of inputs usage, access to markets and technical assistance monitoring. In general, the centers that made the best use of these items were those that achieved better financial indicators.

The main financial indicators considered in the investigation in order to evaluate profitability and economic viability of aquaculture centers were: unit profit rate, unit gross margin indicator, unit net margin.