

CAGE CULTURE OF TAMBAQUI IN THE LAGOA GRANDE RESERVOIR, TOCANTINS, BRAZIL

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Tambaqui *Colossoma macropomum* is considered very important for the freshwater fish farming nationwide, being the main native species cultivated in Brazil. Due to the climatic conditions, its production is concentrated in the North, Northeast and Central West regions, where it is well accepted by the local market. Regarding the main reasons that justify its production, some are highlighted as the juveniles supply, suitable growth parameters, high productivity, resistance and high acceptance by the market. Besides, due to the reduction in the native fisheries stocks, the aquaculture is considered the main sustainable alternative to guarantee the market demands. Tambaqui production in Brazil is basically based on earthen ponds semi intensive systems.

Regarding the fish production in net cages, it is observed that data and information about tambaqui are still short, even considering that its production has started in 1987. Previous studies focused mainly on testing different feeding regimes, stocking densities and protein levels, using small volume net cages.

The present study aimed to evaluate the performance of tambaqui raised in 12 net cages with volume of 18 m³. Tambaqui fingerlings with an average weight of 9.04 ± 4.4g were stocked in a density of 80 fish/ m³, which represents around 750 fish per tank. Feed amount was based on 5% of the total biomass during the first month. After this period, the feeding rate adopted until the end of the trial was 3,5%. Weekly, feed amount was adjusted according to the total biomass of each tank.

Fish were weighed and measured monthly during an eleven month trial and the growth parameters evaluated were: Final live weight, Average daily weight gain and Feed conversion rate. At the end of the study, final average weight obtained was 907,0 ± 132,6g and the feed conversion rate registered during the whole trial was 2,69.

