

ASIAN-PACIFIC AQUACULTURE 2011 & GIANT PRAWN 2011

Conference and Exposition

17 – 21 January 2011, Le Meridian Convention Centre, Kochi, INDIA

FIRST STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

4 – 8 February 2010, Le Meridian, Kochi

World Aquaculture Society (WAS) is the largest aquaculture organization in the world with members from all the major fish producing and trading nations. The annual conferences and Trade Fairs organized by WAS present an ideal opportunity for all stakeholders in Fisheries and allied industries, including researchers, academics, students, farmers and so on to showcase their achievements and explore newer vistas of research. The Asia-Pacific Chapter of WAS (WAS-APC) is organizing the 2011 Asia-Pacific Conference and Exposition, the **ASIAN-PACIFIC AQUACULTURE 2011** (ASPA 2011), at Kochi. The mega event, jointly hosted by College of Fisheries, Kerala Agricultural University, Panangad, Kochi, and the Kerala State Fisheries Department, is scheduled to be held during 17 – 21 January 2011, at the Le Meridian Convention Centre, Kochi. Together with ASPA 2011, an exclusive Conference on freshwater prawns, **GIANT PRAWN 2011** (GP 2011) will also be held.

Aquaculture, which is the production of food for mankind by farming of aquatic animals and plants, is presently the fastest growing food production sector in the world. Fish and fishery products represent one of the most valuable and nutritious food, containing most of the essential nutrients for human health and wellbeing. In global trade, fish is the fastest growing among most agricultural commodities. In value terms, the growth of trade in fish and fishery products in the world is greater than the increase in net exports of other staple agricultural commodities such as rice, tea, coffee, banana etc. Over the past several years the capture fisheries (commercial fishing and capture of fish and similar commodities from the sea) has been stagnating, and any appreciable progress in this sector is not anticipated in the near future because of a continuous decline in the world marine fishery resources. Thus aquaculture emerged as a feasible option for increasing fish production.

As per the latest FAO records, the global production of fish was 145 million tonnes, of which aquaculture contributed nearly 50%. Almost 90% of the aquaculture production came from the Asia-Pacific region, dominated by fish produced from freshwater. India's contribution to world's aquaculture production is significant and the country now ranks second in world aquaculture production, next to China. India produces about 7 million tonnes of fish annually, of which nearly 45 percent (3.12 million tonnes) is from aquaculture, mostly inland and freshwater aquaculture. Kerala contributes significantly to the national production, with a total of 6.5 lakh tonnes most of which coming from the sea, and only about 12% (80,000 tonnes) from the inland sector. In view of the importance of aquaculture as the best viable option for protein food for our population, the International Conference and Exhibition of this magnitude is a golden opportunity for the aquaculture sector in India, and Kerala in particular, to emerge stronger by expanding our horizons to wider arenas in aquaculture production and management. There are two parallel conferences planned in the venue at Le Meridian, Kochi.

The GP 2011, attached to ASPA 2011, is a special conference on giant freshwater prawn, as a sequel to the first International Giant Prawn Conference held in Bangkok, Thailand, in 1980. This is of special significance to India, and Kerala in particular, being a major prawn farming center, and the College of Fisheries being a significant contributor in global freshwater prawn research.

Other important features of the ASPA 2011 & GP 2011 conferences are:

- ASPA 2011 will be the first Conference of its kind organized in India by WAS in its 40 years of history.
- There will be a comprehensive conference involving technical and producer programs.
- There will be more than 2000 international participants, in addition to those from India.
- Nearly 1000 scientific papers by experts will be presented in 6 to 7 concurrent sessions over 4 days.
- There will be an international trade show involving products and services for the aquaculture industry. The Exhibition will be an opportunity to showcase the Fisheries and Aquaculture developments in India, and greater trade benefits to Indian industry.
- The Indian fisheries and aquaculture industry will benefit from the international exposure, and will be featured prominently in all promotion of ASPA 2011.
- Indian aquaculture will benefit from increased international stature as well as from the presence of so many international experts coming to India to share information.
- There will be post-conference tours for the delegates to see the aquaculture developments as well as to visit the major tourism attractions in Kerala.
- **GIANT PRAWN 2011** will be the most significant international event on giant freshwater prawn *Macrobrachium rosenbergii* after the first International Conference on this prawn was held in 1980 in Bangkok, Thailand. Giant freshwater prawn (popularly called Scampi or *Attu Konchu* in Malayalam) which is a native prawn of Kerala, naturally occurring in the Vembanad Lake and adjoining water bodies, has an increasing global presence, and its farming progressed well in several south and Southeast Asian nations. Organized by Michael New OBE, UK, and Dr. C. Mohanakumaran Nair, Dean, College of Fisheries, Panangad, Kochi, this Conference will highlight the global production, prospects for future expansion, trends in consumption, marketing and trade, as well as the emerging biotechnological developments in this sector.

The first Steering Committee meeting of the WAS-APC Board was held at Le Meridian, Kochi during 4 – 8 February 2010, to prepare specific plans for conducting ASPA 2011, which was attended by members of the WAS-APC Board. Five overseas delegates viz. John Cooksey (USA), Roy Palmer (Australia), Mario Stael (Belgium), Jose Fernandez Polanco (Spain) and Lukas Manomaitis (Thailand) attended this meeting. The meeting was jointly chaired by Dr. Lukas Manomaitis and Dr. C. Mohanakumaran Nair. Indian delegates who attended the meeting include Shri. U.K.V. Raju, Chairman, Ananda Group, Bhimavaram, Andhra Pradesh; Dr. B. Meenakumari, Director, CIFT, Kochi; Shri. Vishnu Bhat, Director, MPEDA, Kochi; Dr. M.C. Nandeesh, Agarthala; Dr. Jahageerdar, CIFE, Mumbai; and Dr. K.R. Salin, KAU. Shri. S. Sarma, Hon. Fisheries Minister of Kerala, and Shri. K.R. Viswambaran, Vice Chancellor, Kerala Agricultural University, later addressed the meeting, and a Press Conference to formally announce the Event was held at Hotel Le Meridian, Kochi, at 3 PM on 5 February 2010.

The Minister said that the ASPA 2011, which is the first of its kind in India, will be a milestone in the development of aquaculture in the Country, and will give a new direction to the future developments in this sector. It will facilitate creation of a strong support system by promoting technical and infrastructure developments in Indian aquaculture. The Minister announced a special grant of Rs. 25 lakhs by the State government for the Conference. He said the Conference will be jointly hosted by College of Fisheries, Panangad, Kochi and the State Fisheries Department, with active collaboration from the Central government, and State and Central Fisheries Institutions, such as CIFE, Mumbai; CIFT, Kochi; CMFRI, Kochi; MPEDA, Kochi; NFDB, Hyderabad; and NBFGR, Lucknow, to name a few.