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EUROSHELL – ITALIAN REGIONAL FORUM - CATTOLICA (RN) – JUNE 25TH 2013



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	Family name	Name	Sector	Qualification	Affiliation
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WELCOME

At 9:30 AM Giuseppe Prioli President of AMA welcomed the participants, thanked them for their participation and gave start to works.

PRESENTATION OF EUROSHELL PROJECT

Roberto Pastres (University of Venice) presented the project EUROSHELL (see Annex 1): the project will help to identify a development perspective in the field of shellfish farming in Europe, by improving the transfer of knowledge between science and production.

With the project activities we aim to overcome the factors that hinder the effective management of knowledge within the industry, for example through the organization of meetings at national or regional level, that aim at promoting dialogue between producers and researchers and at developing a good methodology for the transfer of knowledge.

The project's initiatives also aim at establishing a network of operators in Europe, to develop a vision for the sector and to identify the key challenges for scientific research. The results of these initiatives will be integrated into the European Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Platform (EATIP) and will open up opportunities for collaboration with Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) of the European Fisheries Areas Network (FARNET).

PRESENTATION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE DAY

Roberto Pastres presented the organization of the day:

MORNING

- Introduction on the vision for the shellfish sector. Presentation of the diagram sent to the participants and discussion on the vision.
- Introduction on the topics of scientific research in Italy in the shellfish industry. Discussion and suggestions for the identification of future targets for research, to support production.

AFTERNOON

- Presentation of the tools developed by the project.
- The status of shellfish in Italy and initiatives for its strengthening. Proposals and experiences for the development of an Italian (and European) network of researchers and producers, to support the development of the sector.

1 – A VISION FOR THE SHELLFISH SECTOR

Presentation

Roberto Pastres presented EATIP (European Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Platform) (see Annex 2). This platform was created in 2007 to bring together, in a European network, aquaculture stakeholders

to develop a vision of the sector and share a strategic agenda for research and innovation and an action plan. The project Aquainnova, launched in 2010, organized a regional consultation (Warsaw, Oslo, Madrid and Bordeaux) on topics of interest for aquaculture in Europe. The consultations led to develop a vision for European aquaculture in 2030 and set some goals for research and innovation priorities. On these issues a synthesis report has been produced. Euroshell represents an opportunity to contribute to this platform, strengthening the strategic points of interest of the shellfish industry and the Italian participation in this type of initiative.

The discussion opened after showing the diagram of the vision which was sent to the participants before the forum. Participants were invited to express their opinion on the issues identified in the diagram, as well as through their intervention in the discussion, and also indicating for each of the 4 thematic areas on the scheme (Product, Market, Environment and territory, Management and governance) the most significant ones (up to 3), by putting stickers on posters displayed in the room. The results of this survey are described below.

Discussion

Various interventions highlighted the importance to identify quickly new initiatives that give continuity to the various projects underway or recently completed (EUROSHELL, AQUAMED, etc.), in order to implement the strategy defined by the vision. It is very important that the producers become able to address their issues in the various European projects related to the field.

For the strengthening of the shellfish industry in Italy the following main needs have emerged from the discussion:

- **territorial planning:**
 - o identification of suitable areas and classification;
 - o analysis of the constraints arising from other plans (e.g. plans for water management and the effects of the flood spillways on the quality of coastal waters);
 - o revision of the current classification of the areas and identification of new areas, through experimentation of new criteria;
- **administrative simplification and standardization of procedures** over the Italian national territory, since administrative procedures imply today a huge waste of time and resources for producers;
- **quality control, traceability, controls on the imported product;** in fact today the most important limiting factors for the development of the sector are:
 - o the fragmentation of shellfish companies;
 - o the lack of controls on imported products;
 - o the extremely low prices imposed by the big distributors;
- **accessibility to data resulting from monitoring and control activities;** producers should have access to the information on quality parameters collected by the controlling institutions. Such data are often requested by the international market and their lack is a strong limitation for Italian producers;
- **overcoming the fragmentation of data of interest for the sector** (product data, environmental data) by creating a national information repository (for example under the Ministry of Public Health);
- **professional training**
 - o *ad hoc* training courses for the qualification as shellfish farmer should be offered;
 - o qualification should be required to start the production activity;

- qualifications at the level of secondary school degree should be offered for the various expertise needed in the production sector (divers, sailors, etc..);
- the possibility of access to apprenticeship should be offered;
- **education programs**
 - for consumers, for example with taste education projects, to promote the quality of the product;
 - for entrepreneurs and for regional and local authorities, to improve fund raising capability and access to European programs.

The results of the "vote" on the themes indicated in the scheme of the vision can be summarized as follows (see also Annexes 3A and 3B):

- the most interesting issues are those related to the *product*, followed by those related with the *management and governance* and then those related to the *environment* and the *market*;
- the most relevant issues are **technology and innovation** (product), followed by **education and training** (management and governance) and the **knowledge management and access to knowledge** (management and governance);
- notable issues are also *qualitative and quantitative improvement and traceability and labeling* (market), the *quality of the shellfish, consumption and human health* and the *health of organisms and diseases, access to coastal areas, water quality and relationship with other stakeholders*;
- **territorial planning** was added to the scheme since it was not clearly recognized among the existing categories.

2 – OBJECTIVES FOR RESEARCH

Presentation

Martina Bocci (University of Venice) presented an overview of the issues addressed in the scientific publications produced by Italian researchers and appearing in the scientific literature in the last 10 years (see Annex 4). Among the topics addressed in publications, human health and consumer protection, health of organisms, the effects of production on water quality and ecosystems are the most common. Few or no scientific publications stand out the themes of new technologies, product diversification, integrated production, farming and nutrition. Few contributions seem to be available on the most relevant topics identified with the analysis of the vision.

Discussion

The discussion highlighted the following points:

- investment in applied research for the development of new technologies is needed;
- research regarding the effects of the environment on the product and the impact of production on the environment should be continued;
- a mechanism should be found to reward the applied research. The fact that the results of applied research cannot be published on international journal with high score rate is a limitation to the development of research useful to production. Scientists are not motivated to work on applied research because it will not be recognized within the academic context (carriers, publications, etc.).
- public funded research should necessarily be continued because results from private research do not become public patrimony, and this represents another limitation to knowledge transfer.

3 – THE TOOLS DEVELOPED BY EUROSHELL AND THE PROPOSAL FOR A NETWORK OF PRODUCERS AND SCIENTISTS

Presentation

Martina Bocci presented the tools currently being prepared as part of Euroshell:

- 1) database of knowledge
- 2) mapping of the sector (see Annex 5)

She then invited participants to contribute to the collection of "grey" literature that summarizes the results of projects at national, regional or local level, developed over the past ten years. The knowledge database will be accessible via the Internet and it will collect information of immediate interest to the sector of production (research results, empirical knowledge, manuals, best practices, etc.). The database will be available in the five project languages (French, English, Italian, Spanish, Dutch) and will be directed at researchers, professionals, technicians and operators of administrations, producers...

The project team is also preparing a GIS system that will allow to locate all over Europe, areas or places of production, research centers, technical support or technological development, professional organizations, etc. With regard to the mapping of the sector, in the Italian case it appears preferable to map the individual production places, because they cannot always be aggregated in production areas, as in other European countries. In the GIS system, information concerning individual aquaculture enterprises will be accessible as far as the identification of areas of production are concerned (breeding technology and farmed species), according to the most recent census officially available (EUROSTAT).

Martina Bocci presented the Euroshell proposal to establish a network that brings together producers and researchers in the sector of shellfish farming. This network should have the following purposes:

- ensure the dissemination of research results within the productive sector;
- enable producers to effectively communicate their needs in terms of research and development;
- work on other issues relevant to the shellfish industry.

Experiences

Giuseppe Arcangeli presented SIRAM – Società Italiana per la Ricerca Applicata in Molluschicoltura Italian Society for the applied research in the field of shellfish farming (Annex 6).

Eraldo Rambaldi presented a picture of the trends in aquaculture in Italy, Europe and the world and pointed out some emerging problems (Annex7).

Massimo Bellavista presented the GAC (FLAG) of Rimini. In line with the requirements of the European legislation, the GAC is made up of representatives of producers, stakeholders and local institutions (in this case the Rimini province and the province of Ferrara). The GAC has presented its Strategic Plan. The GAC is responsible for business strategies, reduction of environmental impacts, education to fund raising in European contexts. To improve the efficiency of GACs, the procedures to allow the private sector to access to public funding should be greatly simplified. A given share of the funds managed by GACs is expected to be allocated to research.

Discussion

In Italy we have already gained in past experiences of groups of researchers who acted as liaison between research institutions and the world of production. These experiences have been fruitful as long as there

was a separation of roles between basic research and applied research. An alternative proposal would be the creation of a single national committee for the shellfish sector, with regional representations.

These centers should provide technical-scientific assistance to producers. This role cannot be carried out by research agencies that have other purposes and various constraints (including the problem of the scientific production and publications).

It might be appropriate to set up a national research center for each of the key species and converge on the center of the funds available.

Strengthening of GAC could promote the sector. They should be structured with their own staff personnel and their decisions should be determinant a national level in defining the criteria of quality, sizes and all other decisions relevant to the industry.

The establishment of a network to facilitate communication between research and production is confirmed as a need perceived by the industry.

Different organizations of the network can be prefigured:

- one national reference center + regional centers;
- some national reference centers with different skills;
- no national center but a "database" of institutions and research facilities able to answer from time to time to the need of production.

The main need is to find a stable source of funding, which allows the network to last. The only solution seems to be a structure supported also by the production itself.

The strengthening of the unitary representation of the sector at national level seems to be a prerequisite for the Italian context.

The GACs (FLAGs) could be used to launch a network of this type, to the organization of a dedicated structure to still be involved from the start of the initiatives that move at European level.

CONCLUSIONS

Giuseppe Prioli thanked all the participants for interventions and contributions to the discussion. The report of the day, in Italian, will be sent to all participants, along with the projected presentations. The forum ended at 5:00 PM.

ANNEXES

NB: All the annexes are in Italian, as they were presented to the participation.

Annex 1 – Presentation: EUROSHELL project

Annex 2 – Presentation: a vision for the future of aquaculture sector in Europe

Annex 3A e 3B – Results of vote on the vision

Annex 4 – Objectives for research

Annex 5 – Tools developed by Euroshell and the proposal for the establishment of a network for the sector

Annex 6 – Presentation of the Italian Society for the applied research in the field of shellfish farming (SIRAM)

Annex 7 – Trends in aquaculture in Italy, Europe and the world