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## RESEARCH REPORTS

Sustainable Aquaculture for a Secure Future

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**Title:** Potential for Supermarket Outlets for Tilapia in Nicaragua

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**Abstract:** AquaFish will not be distributing this publication. Copies may be obtained by writing to the authors.

Development of a domestic market for farm-raised tilapia in Nicaragua could provide an economic incentive for development of a farm-raised tilapia industry in Nicaragua. The goal of this project was to assess the domestic market as an alternative market outlet to the export market. While the overall study includes analyses of supermarket, fish market, and restaurant market outlets, this document will focus on the supermarket segment. A census of the supermarkets listed in telephone books in the major urban areas and small towns in the country resulted in 35 completed supermarket questionnaires. Information was collected on both tilapia and other types of fish and seafood sold, prices, most frequently sold fish products, marketing channels, supplier information, attitudes towards tilapia, and store characteristics. Survey results showed that only one-fourth of supermarkets in the country sold tilapia in spite of the substantial fishery for tilapia in Lake Nicaragua. Tilapia were not sold due to off-flavor (tastes like earth), lack of supply, and fears of selling contaminated fish from Lake Nicaragua. Nevertheless, those supermarkets that sold tilapia indicated that their sales in 2000 were higher than they had been in 1999. A high percentage of supermarkets indicated that they were very likely to begin selling tilapia in the coming year. Inconsistent supplies and insufficient quantities were the greatest supply problems. Fresh fillets were preferred but quality and availability needed to be improved. For a domestic market for farm-raised tilapia to develop in Nicaragua, the issue of consumer fears of contamination must be addressed. Broad-based consumer education, third-party certification, and labeling programs may be needed to assist consumers to differentiate between farm-raised and wild-caught tilapia. Tilapia farms and processors in Nicaragua will need to guarantee and ensure a consistent supply of good-flavor, high-quality, and safe tilapia products.

This abstract was excerpted from the original paper.

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