



PD/A CRSP EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL TECHNICAL REPORT

PRODUCTION STRATEGIES CHARACTERIZING SMALL- AND MEDIUM-SCALE TILAPIA FARMS: APPROACHES, BARRIERS, AND NEEDS

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Abstract*

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ABSTRACT

This study portrays Honduran tilapia producer perceptions of production processes, limitations, constraints, and possibilities through on-farm interviews with a selected sample of growers. Wholesalers, distributors, and urban restaurant buyers typically rely on connections to large-scale producers who can provide a regular supply of uniform product. Small- and medium-scale farmers rely largely on a diverse set of local strategies for realizing cash from their tilapia crops. One significant commercial distribution channel for small-scale and limited-resource farmers often is the intermediary or “coyote.” Such persons generally do not live in the community but instead travel from community to community buying and selling farm products. Rural producers in Honduras face particular difficulties due to the difficult terrain, poor road system, and fragmentation in the rural sector. Students from the Escuela Agrícola Panamericana El Zamorano are currently conducting interviews with approximately 20 tilapia farmers at each of five regionally representative fingerling supplier sites throughout Honduras. As many women producers as possible will be interviewed so that the study results can identify their special problems and needs. An interview instrument was collaboratively developed by the researchers, who are extending the instrument used in a previous study, adapting it to focus on experiences and perceptions of the distribution process. At least 20 interviews have been completed. Previous research showed that almost half the Honduran farmers report that middlemen purchase some or all of their fish. A higher proportion of farmers sold tilapia to restaurants in Honduras than in the other PD/A country samples. Honduran farmers were the most confident about being able to sell their tilapia at some price, even if it was not what they originally asked. The most common distribution method for farmers is pond-bank sales to neighbors and to others coming to the ponds at harvest. Word-of-mouth knowledge about prospective harvests or the willingness to partial-harvest for immediate sale was a primary means for marketing tilapia for most small- and medium-scale farmers. Data collection continues from a new sample of tilapia producers that will provide longitudinal data on production practices and distribution strategies to verify and extend the previous research findings.