

**INCREASING PART OF TILAPIA *Oreochromis niloticus* IN BRASILIAN
AQUACULTURE: EXAMPLE OF RIBEIRA VALLEY
IN THE STATE OF SÃO PAULO**

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Abstract

Documental studies and interviews of significant actors allowed to rebuild the main historic steps of fish farming in Ribeira Valley. From 1984 to 1990, the State of São Paulo has promoted the development of subsistence small-scale fish farming. The State's action was mainly focused on technical assistance and fry dissemination of the following species: tilapia, common carp and after, indigenous species. During this period, private individual attempts to develop commercial fish farming were few and it is only since 1992 that this type of commercial fish farming started to develop in Ribeira Valley. Two main reasons induced that change: access to commercial feed and the development of “Pesque e Pague” fishing in small farms near the suburb of São Paulo City.

According to a general survey conducted in 2002 on a sample of 58 representative fish farmers, this commercial fish farming is mainly carried out by farmers coming from other states of Brazil. The typology analysis of data emphasize a complex relation between the different categories of farmers and the level of input utilization in their farming system. The farmer without any other activities are having the highest intensive strategy, the multi crops farmers the lesser intensive strategy and farms with a source of income not related to agriculture the intermediate intensive strategy.

From 1992 to 1997, most fish commercialised is produced in polyculture of indigenous species (pacu, tambacu etc.), bighead carp and some miscellaneous species. In 1997 the share of tilapia in total fish farming production was only 5%. By 2002, the proportion had dramatically increased to 33%. This increase of tilapia production is related to the availability of all male reversed fry and to increasing commercial demand from “Pesque e Pague” fishing farms. As a matter of fact, “Pesque e Pague” fishing farms are

looking for increasing variety species in order to better satisfy their customers. Today, this demand is stabilizing and slightly dropping.

Under these conditions, the fish farmers of Ribeira Valley, are looking for new markets in the category of processed fish for large scale retail market. Farmers do believe that the best species matching the requirement of this category of demand is the tilapia.

However, the problems fish farming has to face leads to an increased competition among fish farmers.

The socio professional diversity of fish farmers is not in favour of the implementation of a mutual confidence state that could induce collective actions.