

DFID Research in Vietnam

By Mags Crumlish



Discussions with fishermen



An introductory visit in March 2000 by Mags Crumlish and Natasja Sheriff to HUS initiated the study. During this visit, group discussions with pond and cage farmers were conducted. A structured questionnaire was designed together in English and Vietnamese by both research teams and this was pilot tested during the first visit. With assistance from an extension officer the Vietnamese research team were able to visit 219 households distributed throughout the lagoon. These families were interviewed using the structured questionnaire. Simultaneously, other members of the team held group discussions with fish farmers and conducted key informant interviews with traders, middlemen and commune heads/leaders. The merging of methodologies resulted in both quantitative data (from the questionnaires) and qualitative data (from the interviews and group discussions) being gathered. This

Central Vietnam

Recently, a 6-month DAD funded project based in the central region of Vietnam was carried out in collaboration between Mags Crumlish, Natasja Sheriff and Dave Little from IOA, Stirling and Ton That Phap from Hue University of Science (HUS). The aim of the project was to carry out a situation appraisal of the aquaculture activities within Tam Giang lagoon, Hue, Vietnam. This is one of the largest lagoons in South East Asia and represents an area of both brackish and freshwater covering 22,000 hectares. The waters of the lagoon are relatively shallow with an average depth of only 2m, which make it ideal for aquaculture. Aquaculture activities in the lagoon have rapidly increased since the original seaweed culture started in 1977 and presently, many families are involved in shrimp, fish and crab culture within net

In November 1999 the worst flood to hit Hue in over a century occurred and caused considerable damage to fishing gears and aquaculture systems situated around the lagoon. Prior to the flood, the lagoon was connected to the South China Sea by two

openings, however, after November 1999, an additional opening arose. Therefore, one of the project activities was to investigate the impact of the flood on the livelihood activities of people living around the lagoon. Emphasis was placed on those participating in aquaculture but families in the fishing communities were also included.



Key informant interviews



Pangasius cultured in cages

provided much more robust information enabling dissemination of results to wider audience, including communities living around the lagoon and not only those families involved in aquaculture. Other groups thought to benefit from the information either directly or indirectly include fishing communities, commune leaders, extension services, as well as researchers and development agencies.

Mags Crumlish collated the project results and conducted additional interviews during a final visit to HUS in November 2000. The project data are being analysed and will be presented to the farming communities in March 2001, by various routes. The main pathway will be through meetings organised and conducted by Ton That Phap of HUS, but a pamphlet describing the study and the results will be published in both Vietnamese and English. A report for DFID with more detailed information from the project activities will be ready early next year (2001) and a manuscript is currently in preparation.

Southern Vietnam

In October 2000, a small DFID funded project in collaboration with Mags Crumlish, Jimmy Turnbull, Hugh Ferguson and Andy Shinn, with colleagues Ms TT Dung and Mr. Hung from CanTho University, Vietnam commenced. This duration of the project is 5 months,

primarily in CanTho within the Mekong Delta. In southern Vietnam many households are involved in agricultural and aquaculture activities and a high number of families involved in aquaculture stock *Pangasius spp.* either in cages or ponds

Pangasius spp. have been cultured in small rural ponds for many years in the Mekong Delta but in the late 1980's researchers in Vietnam were able to successfully control artificial breeding which resulted in an increased production of available fry. From this time onwards the number of families intensively culturing *Pangasius* has risen. Most of



Meeting with fishfarmers

the intensive culture is within cages located primarily in An Giang province but this has also spread to DongThap and Long An provinces. *Pangasius spp.* are considered by many Vietnamese families to be a fairly robust fish that can be maintained in poorer water quality conditions. They are also thought not to succumb easily to diseases, both factors that increase the popularity of *Pangasius* culture. However, during a visit to CanTho University in June 2000 by Mags Crumlish and Kim Thompson on another DFID funded project (R 7463), many *Pangasius* farmers were reporting large scale mortalities of their stocked fish. In fact, it was not unusual for farmers to travel long distances to seek help from CanTho University with as many as five farmers per day arriving at the laboratory with fish samples for analyses. This continued for approximately two months and included families with cage culture and more rural pond culture systems.

Samples were taken back to Stirling for histopathology and a bacterial pathogen was identified as the cause of disease by Hugh Ferguson. Parasitic infections were also observed.

The aims of this short project include identification of the pathogen and possible risk factors for the disease, understanding the impact that disease has on successful fish production within the various culture systems, as well as looking at the livelihood strategies adopted by *Pangasius* farmers. To achieve these aims, the project activities are diverse, but again methodologies have been merged to provide **both quantitative and qualitative data**. The fieldwork commenced in October 2000 and will finish at the beginning of February 2001.

For more details on both projects contact Mags Crumlish (email MC3@stir.ac.uk) at Institute of Aquaculture, Stirling University, Stirling.