



INFOFISH speaks to ...

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- ☞ *For readers who are not familiar with the Associação Brasileira de Criadores de Camarão (ABCC), could you elaborate on its mandate and role in developing the shrimp sector in Brazil?*
- IR Brazilian shrimp farming began its commercial exploitation in the late 1970s. When ABCC came into existence in 1984, at which time I was the Technical Director, the Association played a unifying and catalytic role in terms of technological development in the sector. This prominent role contributed to the creation, in 1989, of an ambitious National Development Project, which included the setting up of 100 000 hectares of shrimp ponds in a 10-year period. However, following the formation of a new federal government in 1990, this project was put aside and only in the second half of the 1990s, with me now as President of ABCC, did shrimp farming begin to grow, going from a production volume of 3 600 tonnes in 1997 to 90 190 tonnes in 2003, reflecting a growth of 2 405.3% in this short period of time. This growth was export-led, with shrimp exports showing an even more surprising growth of 14 513%, rising from 400 tonnes in 1998 to 58 455 tonnes in 2003.
- ☞ *Could you also provide some essential background on the shrimp farming sector in Brazil?*
- IR The intensification of Brazilian shrimp farming began soon after our involvement with Taiwanese shrimp farming. In 1986, we contacted Dr I-Chiu Liao, Director of the Tungkang Marine Laboratory (Kaohsiung, Taiwan) and participated in an intense exchange program in freshwater shrimp (*Macrobrachium rosenbergii*) and marine shrimp (*Penaeus monodon*) farming. This learning process was the basis for the development of advanced technology that guided the growth of Brazilian shrimp farming, contributing to Brazil taking the lead in marine shrimp production in the Americas, where in 2003, Brazil placed first in the world in terms of productivity with 6 083 kg/ha. ABCC has led successful efforts to implement Best Management Practices and biosecurity measures for over 20 years now, with the main challenges that affect productivity being the presence of well-known diseases that can have a seasonal effect on production.
- ☞ *A few years ago, the ABCC had announced its intention to set up a shrimp farming site in Rio Grande de Norte, which combines the activities of large and small producers. This new type of farming system was dubbed the Marine Shrimp Farm Condominium Model. Could you provide an update on the initiative?*
- IR Unfortunately, the Marine Shrimp Farm Condominium Model project elaborated by my consulting company, MCR Aquaculture, never got off the ground, both by a lack of financial support as well as interested partners. The Environmental Licence, which was only issued after a long two-year delay, placed too many restrictions on the project, which in turn discouraged potential investors. But I am still confident that this model of long-term investments into shrimp farming can provide a profitable return on investment within 3-5 years and can be technically viable for small, medium and large shrimp farms.
- ☞ *In an article entitled "Domestic market for farmed shrimp in Brazil" that you had co-authored in March 2015, it was mentioned that the bulk of the farmed shrimp production is absorbed by the domestic market. At that time, average annual per capita shrimp consumption in Brazil was just 0.6 kg but this figure was expected to rise. In addition, those in the industry made a conscious decision to develop the domestic market. Furthermore, in your recent interview with Intrafish earlier this year, you highlighted that a 20% increase in production is targeted, anticipating domestic demand. What were the reasons for this shift in focus, and what are the present and predicted trends in the domestic market for shrimp products? Also, what made farmed shrimp a preferred item for domestic consumers?*
- IR The original reason for this shift towards the domestic market was the USA dumping process against Brazilian shrimp. The support behind the exports of Brazilian farmed shrimp came from some big American importing companies, due mainly to the links they had with the Brazilian lobster industry, which also became involved with farmed shrimp. However, with the dumping process coming into play and some Brazilian political

instability, these companies decided to no longer import shrimp from Brazil, considering that the importer and not the exporter is responsible for “paying the dumping duty”. On the other hand, due to low international prices and the devaluation of the US dollar, farmed shrimp producers, even with a lack of financial support, started to deliver their best product to local markets leading to an increase in demand and, eventually to production growing to 150 000 tonnes, or 150 % in relation to 2016 (60 000 tonnes). Domestic prices remain competitive in relation to international prices.

☞ *On to international trade, what is the export target for Brazilian shrimp in 2023? Is the industry on track to realize this target?*

IR At this time, considering the unstable situation in terms of international farmed shrimp demand and prices, we can safely state that Brazil will continue to concentrate its effort in opening additional local markets, through increased processing and value-adding, mainly to transform fresh shrimp into value-added products, such as headless, fillet, breaded, butterfly, etc. A few companies are exporting small quantities and the sector closely follows the international shrimp market, but export projections for 2023 have not, and probably will not be met.

☞ *Brazil's phytosanitary health risk policy in the past has meant that imports of shrimp into the country were curtailed until May 2019 when a Supreme Court ruling allowed the entry of foreign shrimp. Does the ABCC agree with this decision and what are your thoughts on the perception by some countries that the biosecurity policy is a form of protectionism?*

IR There is no way we can agree with the absurd decision by the Brazilian Supreme Court!! First of all, nothing justifies putting at risk the rich Brazilian crustacean biodiversity. One only has to see that Ecuador prohibits the entry of crustaceans, including *Artemia salina* from Brazil because of only one disease, IMNV, when in fact we have scientific evidence that the two whitespot strains present in Ecuadorian shrimp farming are different from the two strains present in Brazilian farmed shrimp. In addition, Brazil has a legislation, IN 02/2018, which prohibits the import of crustaceans from countries that have a lower sanitary standard than Brazil (e.g. Ecuador) or that do not report their sanitary condition to OIE (e.g. Argentina).

☞ *In Latin America, Brazil and Chile are said to be investing large sums of money into developing the alternative seafood sector on the basis that it provides sustainable alternatives to conventional seafood. On example of this is when the Good Food Institute was reported to have allocated funds to the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa). Is the ABCC seriously concerned that one day, alternative seafood will significantly erode the market for shrimp?*

No, ABCC is not at all concerned that alternative seafood will in any way affect the market for shrimp or for seafood in general in Brazil. First of all, the question states that “on the basis that it provides sustainable alternatives to conventional seafood”. Well, we are of the opinion that aquaculture in general and shrimp farming specifically, is done the right way, in a sustainable manner in many regions of the world, including Brazil, so there seems to be a certain bias in the question. But to get to the point, it is our belief that alternative seafood will not be a factor anytime soon in our market because, for example, Embrapa does not have the funds for this kind of research to provide practical results, even with allocation of resources from outside sources. In addition, even if at some point in time, some types of alternative seafood did become commercially viable and available, it is very difficult to say what kind of reactions consumers would have to these products in Brazil; perhaps at best they could become a niche market but not a threat to the shrimp market.

☞ *What does the future look like for Brazil's shrimp industry?*

IR My thesis to obtain my Fisheries Engineer Degree in 1974 was “Raising Marine Shrimp with Feed”, when global farmed shrimp production was 14 000 tonnes. After visiting and getting to know very well all the main farmed shrimp producing countries, I can safely say that Brazil will never be a major player in the farmed shrimp sector. Although *L. vannamei* is already farmed in more than 250 small cities around the Northeast Region and involving 3 300 shrimp farmers, due to the lack of government support as well as the uncertainties brought about by changing environmental policies, it will be very difficult to attract the necessary big investors who can bring technology and financial support to also help the small farmers.



Shrimp farmers in Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil