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An Overview of the Aquaculture Sector in Egypt: Current Trend and the Development Strategies

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Abstract

Fish production from aquaculture plays an important role in increasing the fisheries production globally. In Egypt, fish production through aquaculture has emerged as the utmost potential way to meet fish demand, food security, livelihood, employment and national GDP. Egypt is the largest African country and the 10th globally in aquaculture production, with about 1.46 million tons/year during 2017. Most of fish farms in Egypt are located in the Nile Delta region and mainly fresh water. Furthermore, mariculture in the region is still at an early stage, even though in recent years a growing number of commercial shrimp farms and fish-farming operations using floating and submerged cages have been established and are encouraging new investments. Current practices for aquaculture in Egypt include extensive, semi-intensive and intensive aquaculture systems, integrated aquaculture systems, aquaponics and rice-field aquaculture, desert aquaculture and mariculture. Different freshwater and marine fish species are successfully cultured in Egypt; the most important species are the tilapias, followed by mullets and carps. Seabream, seabass, meager, eel, and shrimp are also cultured in a wide scale especially on the coastal areas of Mediterranean Sea. This research represents the trends of the aquaculture production in Egypt for the period 1990–2017 and evaluates its current status. The study describes also the obstacles that threaten the sustainable development of this sector such as the availability of seeds and food, the high costs of production and quality of products. The study proposes developmental strategies for authorities to develop and expand aquaculture sector, which could greatly support livelihood and food security in Egypt.

Keywords: Aquaculture, Egypt, fish production, sustainable development