

CASE STUDIES ON AQUACULTURE SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY

1 CASE STUDY OF THE PROMOTION OF AQUACULTURE SEA BREAM IN MADEIRA ISLAND (PORTUGAL)

Sea bream is the most produced species in aquaculture in Madeira. It is a great source of omega 3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, like other species fished in the region. These fatty acids are essential for the development of the central nervous system and associated with the prevention of cardiovascular diseases. The high quality and freshness of Madeira sea bream is recognized by the market, so it is distinguished by the highest price.

The Autonomous Region of Madeira, despite the small land territory, has great potential for the development of this activity in its component of floating fish cultures in the open sea, confirmed by a pilot project in the Bay of Abra and later made a reality by private enterprises. The discussions around the topic should be serious, constructive, with data and concepts from safe and credible sources, to consolidate the growth of this activity in a sustainable way, from an economic, social and environmental point of view. It is a booming sector. By 2020, Madeira wants to reach 5,000 tonnes of aquaculture production, at a time when aquaculture already earns five million euros for Madeira. Pointed as a sustainable alternative to fish imports, this activity is also seen as a way to reduce pressure on wild fish populations, but not everything is a benefit.

Madeira has two competitive advantages compared to other regions: the water temperature and the existence of research, under the responsibility of the Calheta Mariculture Center. The opportunities offered by the regional sea do not go unnoticed in the eyes of investors and aquaculture has proved to be a promising activity, hitherto well accepted by residents but the recent controversy in Ponta de Sol casts doubts about the impact of this activity and has generated some challenge and even demonstrations against the installation of sea cages.

About 500 people participated in a demonstration against the approved aquaculture project for the seafront in the municipality of Ponta do Sol, west of Madeira, alerting to the environmental impact and questioning the added value in the local economy, which is based on tourism. The President of the Pontassolense Autarchy counted on the support of hundreds of popular people who have promoted some protest actions and that have also stimulated a group entitled 'Vigília do nosso mar' on social networks. At stake is the visual impact of the cages on the landscape of the municipality that can be disadvantageous for tourist recipes.



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In October 2020, the Minister of the Sea, Ricardo Serrão Santos was in Madeira for two events related to the sea, the MARE @ Porto Santo 2020 expedition and the public presentation of the National Strategy for the Sea 2021-2030. The document refers to the “maturity” of aquaculture in Madeira, to the knowledge and experiences generated over the 20 years of regional production - the Region was a pioneer in the country – and as “a line of action to continue, valuing and capitalizing on knowledge acquired and promoting drag effects to other sectors, such as tourism and other offshore activities. During the presentation of the National Strategy for the Sea 2030, the Minister repeatedly underlined the importance of responsible and sustainable development of aquaculture for the blue growth of the country and Madeira, pointing to Madeira as “an example”.



Marismar, a regional marine aquaculture production company, and Bluegrowth, a technological innovation consultant for sea affairs, organized a gastronomic event where they gathered several public figures in Funchal, in an event where the aquaculture sea bream from Madeira’s coast was the main star of six dishes designed by three experienced chefs. The event was set to promote the consumption of aquaculture sea bream and to increase the social acceptability of aquaculture in general.

Public figures such as Rui Unas were present, participating in a set of initiatives to encourage the development of gastronomic and aquaculture tourism, having been participating in several related initiatives. This initiative was a joint organization of Marismar and Bluegrowth. Since last year, these two partner companies have been cooperating in the development of new projects and campaigns aimed at stimulating the sustainable development of the aquaculture and fisheries value chain.

INDICATORS

CONFLICT EMERGED DUE TO VISUAL INTRUSION CONFLICTS.

BIBLIOGRAPHY / SOURCES

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