

Croatia: Recommendations from carp conference to improve the future of freshwater fish farmers

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Globally, carps dominate freshwater farmed finfish production, whereas in the EU they form less than a third. European producers are trying to find ways of promoting the nutritional, environmental, social, and cultural values of carp farming in Europe. The International Carp Conference, an event launched by fish farmers' associations from Central and Eastern Europe six years ago, was hosted this year by the Croatian Chamber of Economy in Zagreb on September 21-22. More than 150 carp farmers from Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Serbia met to share their experiences and to identify solutions to common problems at this fourth edition of the event.

Debates were focused on production and market data and trends, consumer perception analyses, improvements in traditional farming systems, as well as on the impact of climate change on carp production. Eurofish's Ekaterina Tribilustova gave a presentation on consumer perception of farmed fish in Croatia, while other presentations covered Poland, Romania and Hungary's use of the EMFF to support carp farming; and the economic losses caused to pond farming by protected fish-eating birds (such as cormorants).

The health management of farmed carp and biosecurity aspects were also discussed, with special attention given to the status of KHV (koi herpes virus) as a notifiable disease and to the scientific evidence for downgrading it to the status of regular disease. Aquaculture legislation: too much or not enough, was the title of a debate on the impact of legislation on fish farmers and on the methods of changing the regulatory framework through the Aquaculture Advisory Council, Marketing Advisory Council, Federation of European Aquaculture Producers or National Fish Farmers Associations.

The conference concluded as it has in the past with participants adopting a declaration, which will be forwarded to the European Commission, European Parliament, and national governments to bring greater attention to the issues faced by carp farmers.