



GHANA NATIONAL AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

THE 'NEW' GNAA IS HERE

NO. 1. 2025



GNAA ELECTIONS 2025



Arrangements For Election of Executive Officers Are As Follows -

Members of the Association may present themselves or other members for the following positions

PRESIDENT - VICE-PRESIDENT - SECRETARY - NATIONAL - ORGANIZER - TREASURER

Nominations are open till Monday, 3rd March , 2025.

Nominations may be made on this platform only. Please write your name, and the name of your nominee. Mr. David Adade and Mr. Kelvin Asuma are the electoral officers for this process. In addition to managing big fish farms, they are senior IT professionals, and are in a position to ensure that everything goes smoothly.

Monday, 10th March is Election Day. Voting will be done on this platform, from 9am till 5pm.

Results will be announced at 6pm, and elected officers will be sworn into office the following day.

This is a crucial stage in the development of the Aquaculture industry. We urge all members to participate in this process, and choose officers to represent them effectively.



WE HAVE A NEW MINISTER

Hon. Emelia Arthur is our new Minister for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development. She is the MP for the Shama Constituency.

Hon Emelia brings a wealth of experience to her new position. We warmly welcome her, and look forward to working with her to advance the fisheries and Aquaculture sector.

ARGULUS: THE SILENT THREAT TO FISH HEALTH

By Seyram Amanie-Adjei

Dear fish farmer, you understand the importance of maintaining optimal water quality, optimal nutrition for your fish and fish health. However, even with the best management practices, your fish can still be susceptible to diseases and parasites. One of the most common and debilitating parasites affecting fish is Argulus, also known as fish lice.

Argulus is a genus of crustacean parasites that infect fish, attaching themselves to the skin, fins, and gills. They are



Argulus infested Ttilapia

visible and leathery parasites that look like tiny 'tortoises' and cause discomfort to fish. These parasites feed on the fish's mucus, skin, and blood, causing significant stress, damage, and disease.

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Argulus infestation may be mild to severe. In mild cases, a few individuals may be found on the fish surfaces while in severe cases may include hundreds of the parasite on a single fish.

Infestation is characterized by the following:

Visible parasites: Adult Argulus can be seen attached to the fish's skin, fins, or gills.

Skin lesions: The attachment of Argulus can cause skin lesions, inflammation, and bleeding from the point of attachment.

Respiratory distress: Heavy infestations can cause respiratory problems, as the parasites attach to the gills.

Lethargy: Infected fish may become lethargic, lose their appetite, and exhibit abnormal swimming behavior.

Argulus infestations can have severe consequences for fish health and production. These consequences result in economic losses to the fish farmer. A few of these are:

Reduced growth rates: Infected fish may experience reduced growth rates, leading to decreased yields.

Increased mortality: Heavy infestations can lead to increased mortality rates.

Decreased water quality: The presence of Argulus can

contribute to decreased water quality, as the parasites can introduce bacteria and other pathogens into the water. This can create a conducive environment for other fish diseases to break out.

Fish lice can be very difficult to eradicate and in some severe cases, can lead to shut down of fish farms. In view of this, prevention is the best bet.

However, to prevent and control Argulus infestations, consider the following measures:

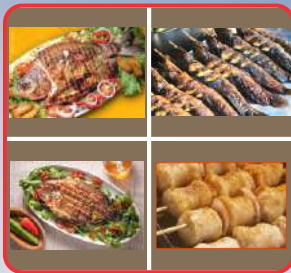
Regular monitoring: Regularly inspect your fish for signs of infestation.

Good water quality: Maintain optimal water quality, including adequate water screening, circulation, oxygenation, and waste removal.

Biosecurity: Implement biosecurity measures, such as disinfecting equipment and isolating new fish, to prevent the introduction of Argulus.

Chemical treatments: Use chemical treatments as a last resort, under the guidance of a qualified fisheries professional.

Argulus is a significant threat to fish health and production. By understanding signs of infestation, and the impact of Argulus, fish farmers can take proactive measures to prevent and control infestations. Regular monitoring, good water quality, biosecurity, and chemical treatments (when necessary) can help mitigate the effects of Argulus and promote healthy, productive fish populations.



TILAPIA AND CATFISH FESTIVAL



This year's version of Tilapia and Catfish Festival will come off in Accra on 24th and 25th July, 2025. The main aim of this event is to showcase Ghana's aquaculture industry as a major contributor to the national economy, especially to food security and job creation. All kinds of aquaculture products will be on show, and visitors can sample delicious modern and traditional tilapia and catfish delights. As the output of fish farmers increases, we need to create awareness among Ghanaians, to enable them patronize our products. Until recently, Ghanaians preferred smoked catfish, and fresh catfish was regarded as taboo. This attitude is changing, and Ghanaians are patronizing

Point and Kill joints and catfish restaurants. Tilapia and catfish sausages, kebabs, burgers and other products are catching on. This must be encouraged, because hardworking fish farmers are harvesting more.

The Tilapia and Catfish Festival 2025 will be a uniquely special event. The Association has come to an arrangement with GBC to do a major publicity of the Festival, and this is expected to give the event a major publicity boost. Our social media handles will be fired up by professionals. And we will make so much noise in town that Ghanaians will have no choice but to attend and patronize the event.

SPECIES DIVERSIFICATION - IN BRIEF

Without doubt, many governments recognize the aquaculture sector as important to the economy. Capture fish output has declined sharply over the years, necessitating the expenditure of large amounts of money to import fish. The provision of affordable fish is a major government responsibility, and aquaculture has been recognised as the sector with the capacity to help close the wide gap between supply and demand.

In Ghana, tilapia has been without doubt the main contributor to national fish output. Up till 2018-20, fish farmers on the Volta Lake accounted for over 90% of national aquaculture output. The ISKN virus outbreak caused a major disruption, and just when farmers in the area were entering a recovery phase, the floods from the Volta Dam occurred. Many farmers are hoping for the promised compensation package, to enable them resume effective production. Tilapia production is yet to make full recovery, so the current output figures - 132,000 metric tonnes in 2022, reflect a decent showing of catfish production. There are clear signs that catfish could provide our aquaculture industry with the badly needed thrust for take-off. Previously, it was thought that the Ghanaian consumer's preference was for only tilapia, and that apart from the not-so-significant segment which enjoyed smoked catfish, tilapia was streets ahead. But point-and-kill joints spread across the nation, followed by catfish restaurants. And now both catfish and tilapia are being transformed into all kinds of exciting products, including sausages and kebabs, burgers and fish crackers, to name a few. There are signs that Ghana will soon gain access to the US and EU markets for smoked catfish, for which there is a big market among Africans in the diaspora.

In spite of these apparently positive indicators, Ghanaian fish farmers are saying that they want the business to be made more attractive by the diversification of the species currently allowed for farming. They say that other species have advantages like fast growth rate, low FCR, easy propagation and low feed costs, compared to tilapia and catfish, and they will make the industry attractive when allowed.

In Nigeria the industry has taken things a step further. Species like Pangasius, Freshwater Brama, Rohu, Pacu and Common Carp are being promoted, and some farmers are offering fingerlings and harvest size fish for sale. However, sales of these exotic species are yet to catch on with consumers. According to a Nigerian aquaculture consultant, 'Nigerians have been eating catfish in its various forms for many years. Even tilapia is not so popular among Nigerians. So it will take some years for farmers of exotic species to make profits. The exception would be when they are able to identify specific exports markets for fillet or other processed fish and produce to meet specific demand. Perhaps they should be doing that now. My point basically is that

diversification must be well planned, otherwise it will not deliver the expected results'.

There are good indicators that Ghanaian regulators will soon review the market situation regarding diversification of farmed species, and recommend a set of practices which will take the industry forward.

One issue that needs to be considered is whether exotic species should be tested for their potential impacts on the local environment, before they are allowed to be farmed. This may need collaboration between local and foreign regulatory agencies.

Another issue that needs to be considered is whether there have been sufficient evaluations of local species to warrant the introduction of foreign species. This may be the time to encourage collaboration of researchers. By sharing results and pursuing joint projects, it may be possible to enhance the productivity of local species, without the need for importing exotic species.

The production of affordable fish is the main objective. Lets all work to achieve it.

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DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF FARM THEFTS



Although it is often underestimated, thefts on fish farms are a major problem which must be solved through deliberate planning. According to a respected consultant, at least 30 per cent of the fish farm's stock is lost through thefts. This problem takes different forms, but although farmers often complain about it, they do not take the deliberate steps required for dealing with it. In recent days, though, it appears that some farmers are rising up against the menace.

Thefts are a great menace on farms along the Volta Lake. The thieves move up to the cages in small canoes, cut through the nets and make away with large amounts of fish. Usually, thefts are carried out by people in nearby communities who know the layout and farm activities quite well, and sometimes these acts are carried out with the connivance of farm personnel. Although farmers employ security personnel, the wide expanse of the Lake makes it difficult to keep an eye on every spot, and the perpetrators take great care to pick their spots.

Across pond farms, the problem is no less serious. Most farms are located some distance away from human

dwelling, so thieves sneak in under cover of darkness, after studying the farm layout and activities, and make away with large amounts of fish. Again, farm personnel sometimes assist thieves to steal. So what can farmers do?

As a management step, security must be an essential part of the farm set up. Where it is possible, some farm personnel must be stationed at night to keep an eye, not only on the fish but also on farm property. Some farmers have lost valuable equipment in recent times.

CCTV cameras linked to computer apps are becoming an important security feature in many farms, and even human dwellings. Some foreign based owners of properties in Ghana keep regular checks by installing apps. One France based apartment owner checks what the house help feeds her dog! There are various apps that enable a farm owner to place cameras at strategic positions on the farm and monitor all movements, from his phone.

Quite an amount of stealing is done by all kinds of birds! This is a serious menace, and the advice to the farmer is to use nets. Of course, the size of the farm determines how much should be spent on nets. But one farmer cautions that 'if you are hesitating to spend on nets, just try to estimate how much you could lose if your ponds are open to birds. They are always flying around, and your fish look very attractive from the air'.

Snakes and other pests can also pose a threat to the security of the fish on your farm. Generally speaking, security sensitivity is an important issue which the farmer must not take lightly. Fortunately, there are experts in the Association who can offer sound advice on farm security.

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ALTERNATIVE FISH FEED PROGRAMME - UPDATE

The Alternative Fish Feed Project, a collaboration between the Ghana National Aquaculture Association, the Fisheries Commission and the Norwegian Agency For Development (NORAD) has wound down the trial stage, and the report will be released shortly.

The programme started with a gathering of experts and fish farmers at the R and B Farms in November, at which various presentations were made and tested. This was followed by trials at three farm locations. The trials were concluded recently, and the results are to be released shortly. Various options are expected to be considered including invitations to potential investors and partners to produce moderate priced fish feed. Ghanaian fish farmers spend a substantial

part of their budgets on feed, so the introduction of lower priced feed will bring quite an amount of relief.

PRESENTATION TO DEPARTMENT OF MARINE AND FISHERIES SCIENCES

Following the conclusion of the alternative feed trials, the tarpaulin ponds have been presented to the Department of Marine and Fisheries Sciences at the University of Ghana, as part of a set of equipment to set up a research and demonstration facility for the Department. The Association is mobilizing funds from willing members of the aquaculture community. We believe that with a well equipped facility, the Department will be well placed to support fish farmers with research data.



Discussions and demonstrations at the Alternative Feed Workshop



OBITUARY - DR. DAVID PESSEY

Participants in the Alternative Fish Feed Programme would be saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. David Pessey, a former lecturer of the University of Ghana. Until his passing, Dr. Pessey was managing his pig farm at Abokobi. He was very instrumental in the preparations for the workshop on alternative feed, and actively participated in the discussions and practical demonstrations. He was very passionate about encouraging the use of moderate priced animal feed as the best means of increasing protein consumption among Ghanaians.



Dr. Pessey at the Alternative Feed workshop



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