



Press release

'Forage fish' identified as affordable and sustainable source of protein

Brazilian research from the World Fisheries Congress, held in Edinburgh from 7-11 May, demonstrates 'forage fish' as a cheap and sustainable source of protein and micronutrients for school children.

So called 'forage fish'- small marine fish, such as anchovies -have traditionally been used to stock fish farms with about 20 to 30 million tonnes used to produce fish meal every year. Four million tonnes of which are used in aquaculture to feed carnivorous fish.

This practice has come under fire due to its poor return in food value. Indeed, by feeding the fish direct to humans for consumption - eight times as much protein reaches our dinner plates.

So why aren't these fish used for direct human consumption? This question has been addressed by Prof Lauro Madureira in conjunction with the Brazilian Ministry of Fisheries through an innovative and imaginative programme.

The problem lay in getting the public to accept a novel product made from what had previously been termed 'trash fish'.

The answer was simple - large numbers of active and hungry school children without too many preconceived attitudes to the source of their food. Provided they were served a meal which was tasty and sustained them - they would be satisfied. Add to this the fact that fish and their benefits to health are well known; it provided a cheap and sustainable source of dietary protein.

Recognizing that products for direct human consumption had to satisfy the dual requirements of low price and high demand Prof Madureira sought answers.

While the anchovy fisheries in the cold waters of southern Brazil could provide a ready and sustainable annual supply of 120,000 tons of fish - in order to be successful the project's challenge was to develop a large scale market for these novel food products.

Madureira worked closely with schools in two cities. As a result 35,000 students tasted, and 70% approved the new product, anchovies canned in tomato sauce, served with pasta or pizza. The product is long lasting and can be easily maintained and transported without the need for cold storage.

Projecting this to the national scale, the 120,000 tonnes sustainable catch of anchovy could serve four meals per month 'during the nine months of the school calendar, to every scholar in the Brazilian school meal programme.

The project has demonstrated an alternative to the practice of producing fishmeal from anchovies in Brazil and can be transformed to generate a new long lasting product, with benefits to fishing fleet, producers and consumers.

This is a major initiative that if implemented widely could have major benefits in other parts of the world.

Professor Madureira, who leads the project, held early discussions with UK seafood manufacturer Young's, who is interested in developing healthy products from anchovy for the UK market.

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Notes to Editors:

About the research project

This research has been led by Prof. Lauro Madureira from the Institute of Oceanography, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande (FURG). The project, funded by the Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture (MPA), the National Council for Science and Technology (CNPq), the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Level -or Education- Personnel (CAPES) and Leal Santos Indústrias Alimentícias Ltda was

carried out between 2009 and 2012. Anchovies will soon be a permanent part of the school meal programme for children in Porto Alegre and Rio Grande, southern Brazil.

About the World Fisheries Congress

- The 6th World Fisheries Congress is hosted by The Fisheries Society of the British Isles(FSBI).
- The World Council of Fisheries Societies is a not-for-profit organisation that is an affiliation of the World's learned societies, seeking to increase the understanding of fish biology and fisheries
- The WCFS is not a lobbying organisation and is funded through subscription from the affiliated societies