

SAP organizes seminar on Domestic Marketing of Shrimps

Having just recovered from a serious price crisis, caused by rising production levels and weak demand, particularly in the United States, the Shrimp farming industry in India, currently, world leaders in farmed shrimp production, is seriously looking to explore alternate markets, entering into the value added segment and of course penetrate into the huge domestic markets through innovative strategies.

Sensing the urgent need to initiate a thought process on the approach through which the domestic markets in the country could be tapped, the Society of Aquaculture Professionals (SAP) organized a one day Seminar entitled “**Tapping the Domestic Market Potential for Shrimps in India**” on the 15th September 2018 at Hotel Raj Park, Chennai. Industry experts specialized in marketing of Seafood in India were roped in to speak during the programme and suggest the way forward to promote domestic consumption of seafood in India.

Ravi Kumar Yellanki, President SAP and Managing Director – Vaisakhi Bio-Marine (P) Ltd., made a brief introductory presentation wherein he outlined the need for developing **Shrimp Domestic Market in India and the potential** it holds.

Ravi observed that the Indian Seafood industry has confined itself to marketing a bulk of its produce to the US with its supply to the EU on a steady downward trend. He pointed out that there was a need to work on the development of new global markets to market Indian shrimp, move up the value chain by going in for value added products, work towards getting the import tariffs imposed by some countries removed, and a compelling need to establish domestic market in India to be able to sustain the sector even when global markets are down.

As present domestic selling is mostly restricted to wet markets and the availability of frozen shrimps in retail market is very limited, however, ample scope exists for development of new segments in retailing. Having a young population, growing health consciousness and an increase in income and purchasing power of the people are positive indicators that need to be exploited for development of domestic markets, Ravi indicated during his presentation.

The key presentation of the day was made by **K. Radhakrishnan, Founder TATA Starquik.com** on **Domesticating Seafood in India**



Dr. Manimaran (right), former Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Fisheries University handing over a memento to K. Radhakrishnan, Founder TATA Starquik.com

Radhakrishnan observed that food and grocery was the largest market segment in the Indian retail sector for 55% share (Rs. 26 Lakh Cr). In spite of this, the Indian Seafood sector continued to sell mostly traditional/old, low valued commodity products such as block frozen or IQF to the export market, already flooded with several global players, offered only low margins and at the mercy of the vagaries of the market, leaving the vast domestic market untapped. He added that there also was a need change with times and diversify into value added, shelf ready and marketing live seafood.

Radhakrishnan stated that India had the largest "Young population", second largest internet users and 2nd largest base of active smart phone users in the world which if, given the convenience and choice, would drive to the new habit of online buying which is rapidly gaining in popularity. Consumers have become comfortable with online buying where the Seafood product is delivered to the consumer within a couple of hours, doing away with the need to visit a dirty wet market where prices need to be bargained, and getting a product of assured quality which could be returned in the event of any issues. The industry also needs to work on providing ample exposure to the Indian consumer Crustacean seafood which includes "new ways to cook", at attractive prices, so that it is made a part of the delicacies in everyday diet.

The Seafood Association in India should take cues from the egg producers in the way they created the supply chain and campaign for goodness of eggs. A Destination Seafood Store with a theatrical display of a variety of seafood could be thought of in every major city in the country and emphasis laid on branding of Seafood products, having a profile for different economic strata and development of trade channels, he added.

S. Kalugasalamurthy of Kasback, in his presentation entitled “**Modern Retailing of Farmed Shrimps in India – The winning strategies**” suggested a Shrimp only model where shrimp is positioned as a commodity and methods are evolved to handle fresh shrimp in bulk through the use of information technology and innovations. He emphasised that value is to be added in the way we market the product by providing visibility and volumes rather than adding value to the product itself and the use of technology for direct selling (click and collect, stores, mobile hubs, home delivery) with a view to minimise product handling and thereby minimising product spoilage.



Ravi Kumar Yellanki, President SAP with S. Kalugasalamurthy of Kasback (right)

Murthy advocated forming of a strategic group for Shrimp retailing by bodies such as SAP or the Shrimp Farmers Association, comprising of representatives from the Retail association, Logistics Industry associations, Digital Industry associations and similar bodies apart from experts from the Shrimp Aquaculture Sector that could work on a conceptual model exclusively for marketing shrimp. He suggested that it was now necessary for the farmers to organize themselves to take an alternate path directly to domestic markets by deviating from the current trend of the farm product

passing through agents to the processors and exporters for value addition before reaching the buyers mostly of global destinations.

The seminar concluded with a voice to take this initiative forward and organize events for the benefit of doctors and key persons from the health sector on the health benefits of shrimp, and prominent chefs from the catering industry on methods of preparation of healthy and tasty shrimp. In his concluding remarks, Ravi Kumar Yellanki said that the seminar was just a beginning that will be followed up by more activities to stimulate interest in the idea of shrimp as a major food item in the domestic market. He proposed to evolve a set of recommendations that could be provided to funding agencies such as the National Fisheries Development board to initiate measures to popularise shrimp consumption as well as to support domestic marketing initiatives. Around 75 participants representing all stakeholder groups of the sector attended the programme.

The Society of Aquaculture Professional (SAP) is a non-profit, non-government organization established for and by a group of aquaculture professionals in India in the year 2003 with a view to help aquaculture professionals advance the art, science and practice of aquaculture by providing opportunities for continuous professional development of individuals and being the voice of professionals to all stakeholders in the aquaculture industry.