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Is Europe ready for integrated multi-trophic aquaculture?

A survey on the perspectives of European farmers and scientists with IMTA experience

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Abstract

Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA) refers to the integrated farming of several species from different trophic levels in close proximity. In IMTA, one species is intended to complement another. The concept has long been in use in Asia and contributes significantly to the sustainability of aquaculture as it can potentially drive ecological efficiency, environmental acceptability, product-diversity, profitability and benefit society. Although the concept has received increasing academic attention during the last two decades, it has not yet become a commercial reality in European mariculture. The reasons for this were explored, by interviewing farmers and scientists with previous experience on IMTA. The interviewing approach can be effective in identifying important omissions from the available literature and also possible exaggerations of positive results. For the purposes of this study, a qualitative survey was undertaken using a structured questionnaire with open-ended questions. As a result, the opinions of 34 farmers and scientists with substantial experience of IMTA

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