Initial Questions the County Agent Can Ask the Prospective Fish Culturist

Gef Flimlin, New Jersey Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service

This publication will help extension personnel, who have little or no experience with aquaculture operations, respond to requests for assistance. Completed questionnaires, documenting areas of interest, will be sent to the state Aquaculture Specialist (or other knowledgeable agent*) to determine the most appropriate action for the prospective fish farmer. Agents should retain a copy of the completed questionnaires for their records, and to help direct program development.

*Identified by the director of extension in each state and listed in the quarterly newsletter, *Northeastern Aquaculture*, published by the Northeastern Regional Aquaculture Center.
Questionnaire

Personal Information

Date: ____________________________
Name: __________________________
Address: ________________________
City: ____________________________
County: _________________________
State: __________________________ ZIP: ___________________
Phone: Home ( ) Business ( )

1. What do you want to grow? __________________________________________ __not sure
2. Are you currently employed? ( Y, N )
   In what occupation? ___________________________________________________
3. Are you planning to do aquaculture □ full or □ part time?
4. Is your interest in aquaculture intended for
   □ business? □ hobby? □ other? ______________________________
5. What brought about your interest in aquaculture?
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
6. Have you ever raised fish? ( Y, N )
   Comment: _______________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

I. Physical Parameters

Where do you plan to culture your fish? (check one or more)

□ Ponds
  (go to “A” if existing, “B” if ponds must be constructed)
□ Raceways or Flow-through systems (go to “C”)
□ Closed systems: □ indoors □ outdoors (go to “D”)
□ Other:
  (go to “II”, “III”, or “IV” as appropriate)
□ Undecided (send basic information and file for followup)

A. For existing ponds:
1. How old is the pond? ______________________________
2. Is the pond □ natural or □ constructed?
3. What shape and how large is the pond?
   □ Round □ Oblong □ Square
   □ Rectangular □ Irregular
   Surface acres or dimensions: __________________________
   Maximum depth _________ Average depth __________
4. Is the pond drainable? ( Y, N )
   If so, what type of drainage structure does it have?
   (e.g., gate valves, flash board risers, other)
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________
5. Are there any tree stumps in the pond? ( Y, N )
6. Are there any deep holes in the pond? ( Y, N )
7. Do you plan to use □ cages or □ small net pens?
8. Does the pond freeze during the winter? ( Y, N )
   How deep? __________________________
9. What is the present use of the pond? (irrigation, recreation, etc.)
   _______________________________________________________
10. Does the pond have an outflow? ( Y, N )
    Into what? __________________________
11. Is there any known or suspected runoff into the pond from agricultural fertilizers or pesticides, septic leakage, roads, livestock feedlots, garbage dumps, etc.? ( Y, N )
    If yes, indicate what __________________________
II. Water Analysis

1. What is the water source?
   □ Well    How deep? ____________________________
   □ Stream or river
   □ Spring
   □ Water table
   □ City water
   □ Run off

2. What is the volume of flowing water available in gallons per minute? ____________________________

3. Do you know these water chemistry parameters for your source? (Y, N)
   If yes, indicate the values and any known fluctuations?
   □ Hardness: ____________________________
   □ Alkalinity: ____________________________
   □ pH: ____________________________
   □ Dissolved oxygen: ____________________________
   □ Temperature range: ____________________________
   □ Iron or mineral content: ____________________________
   □ Turbidity or clarity analysis: ____________________________
   □ Color (eg. green, light brown, dark brown, etc.): ____________________________
   □ Salinity: ____________________________
III. Fish Biology

1. What fish are you proposing to grow? ________________________________

2. Why are you choosing this fish to culture? ____________________________

3. Are you knowledgeable about its biology, nutrition, physical, and physiological requirements? (Y, N)

4. In the culture operation will you:
   - [ ] Condition and spawn broodstock
   - [ ] Incubate and hatch eggs
   - [ ] Rear fry
   - [ ] Rear fingerlings

5. Have you researched its marketability? (Y, N)

IV. Business Concerns

1. Have you done a business plan? (Y, N)

2. Do you have a marketing plan? (Y, N)

3. Do you have financing? (Y, N)
   - Enough to cover you for three years or through several crop failures? (Y, N)

4. Any relevant previous experience in aquaculture, farming, or marketing seafood? (Y, N)

5. Have you had any aquaculture training or education? (Y, N)
   - Describe: ____________________________________________________________

6. Do you anticipate any problems with neighbors? (Y, N)

7. Has this project been discussed with the town zoning office? (Y, N)
   - What was the response? _____________________________________________

8. Have you contacted the state agency(ies) responsible for aquaculture permits? (Y, N)

9. Do you have access to fingerlings, feed, and appropriate aquaculture supplies? (Y, N)

10. Is there a knowledgeable labor force available in the area? (Y, N)
    - Will this be a family operation? (Y, N)

11. Have you discussed this venture with (name of contact):
    - [ ] State Fisheries Agency __________________________
    - [ ] State Department of Health __________________________
    - [ ] State Department of Agriculture __________________________
    - [ ] Local Soil Conservation District __________________________
    - [ ] University Fisheries Staff __________________________

12. List other contacts made:

County Agent Action and/or comments (advice given, publications sent, referrals):

List any specific questions from the caller:

This completed form should be sent to:

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