

TCP/LAT/3001 "Improving aquatic animal health and quality and safety of aquatic products"

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Rainbow trout pond at Silakas farm

In October 2004, the National Board of Fisheries of Latvia and FAO started off a new technical cooperation project titled "Improving aquatic animal health and quality and safety of aquatic products" (TCP/LAT/3001). Latvia, being one of the 10 countries which entered the European Union in early 2004, is a country that has some tradition in carp, salmon and trout culture (see photo above) and which initiated recently activities in crayfish culture. The total aquaculture production of crayfish, *Astacus astacus*, in Latvia in 2004 will be around 4 tonnes, which can easily be absorbed by the domestic market (a market which is estimated to be able to absorb at least 40 tonnes annually). Total aquaculture production of Latvia in 2003 was 608 tonnes. There are around 11 000 ha of aquaculture ponds in Latvia; most are cultured extensively. Having a 531 km long coastline bordering the Baltic Sea and a huge number of natural reservoirs, of which only less than 140 are being currently utilized, there appears to be a considerable potential for both coastal and inland aquaculture development in Latvia.

The technical cooperation project will try to achieve before the end of 2005 the following outputs:

1. a review of the current status of aquaculture in Latvia;
2. a strategy for sustainable aquaculture development in Latvia;
3. a national aquatic animal health strategy is developed for controlling diseases and reducing losses in aquaculture;
4. a review and update of the requirements for improving quality and safety of aquatic animal products;

5. improved national capacity for aquatic animal health management and quality and safety assurance of aquatic products; and
6. improved aquatic animal health and quality and safety of aquatic products to better engage in international trade in aquatic animals and animal products.

It is expected that in 2005, the review of the current status of aquaculture in Latvia, jointly being prepared by the newly formed Latvian Fish Resources Agency (LATFRA), the Latvian Crayfish and Fish Farmers Association, and the National Board of Fisheries, will be ready for publication. The review will be the starting point for the other activities that will be carried out by the project. More information on this project and its outcomes will be published in the next issue of FAN or can be obtained from Mr Rohana Subasinghe or Raymon van Anrooy.



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*Three-year old crayfish, *Astacus astacus*, in tank*