

Welcome and Introduction by Marcela Villarreal

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at

VIRTUAL DIALOGUES ON THE ROAD TO THE 34TH COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES
Innovative biosecurity approaches for a healthier aquaculture industry

Wednesday 15 July 2020, 16:00-17:30

Zoom Webinar

Dear Member Representatives, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Good afternoon (and morning and evening, depending on where you are). Welcome and thank you for joining us today at this virtual dialogue on ***Innovative biosecurity approaches for a healthier aquaculture industry*** organized in support of the 34th Committee on Fisheries. My name is Marcela Villarreal, I am the Director of FAO's Partnerships Division.
- As you know, the Committee on Fisheries (COFI), is an international inter-governmental forum where major global fisheries and aquaculture problems and issues are examined and recommendations addressed to governments, regional fishery bodies, non-governmental organizations, fishworkers, FAO and the international community, periodically on a world-wide basis.
- As a programmatic and knowledge forum, COFI relies upon expertise, generation of data, innovations and promotion of good practices to ensure sustainability of fisheries and aquaculture. Non-state actors, including academia partners such as Mississippi State University, are key contributors to COFI and other fora necessary for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- I am proud to say that FAO and Mississippi State University have enjoyed a strong partnership since 2010; collaborating to exchange expertise, experience and knowledge to improve food and nutrition security and alleviate poverty through sustainable aquaculture development efforts. We know that exchanging knowledge and seeking solutions in areas of animal and veterinary public health is strongly interlinked to human well-being and

caretaking of our planet, both key elements of the One Health Initiative and the 2030 Agenda.

- Under the One Health Initiative, FAO and Mississippi State University are collaborating to strengthen capacities to achieve better aquaculture systems globally. An example of this important work was a joint special Congressional briefing in the U.S. Senate on aquaculture biosecurity which took place in 2019. The briefing addressed the rising threat of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) which requires a holistic and multisectoral approach given antimicrobials are used to treat various infectious diseases in animals that may be the same or similar to those used in humans.
- The successful partnership with Mississippi State University has led to FAO and the University to jointly work in several projects, for instance, *Aquaculture and Rural Communities in Nigeria: Farm Diversification Strategy through Integrated Agriculture-Aquaculture Systems and Nutrition-Sensitive Value Chains for Better Nutrition Outcomes* and another project on *pilot testing the Progressive Management Pathway for Improving Aquaculture Biosecurity in Bangladesh*.
- I am very pleased to see that in partnership with Mississippi State University, we are truly improving food security and nutrition security and improving stakeholder livelihoods. I believe that successful stories will be presented during the expert panel discussion session.
- Now allow me to introduce today's keynote speakers and the members of our panel.
 - **Mark Lawrence** who is Director of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab on Fish, at Mississippi State University; and
 - **Matthias Halwart**, who is the head of the Aquaculture Branch in FAO's Fisheries and Aquaculture Division

And today's distinguished panelists include:

- **Victoria Alday**, Director, Biosecurity and Breeding Programmes from Saudi Arabia's National Aqua Group, will speak on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's experience of specific pathogen free stocks for shrimp aquaculture
- **Patrick Sorgeloos**, Professor, Department of Animal Production, Ghent University (in collaboration with Peter De Schryver of INVE Aquaculture), will discuss microbial management protocols to reduce antimicrobial resistance and as part of Good Aquaculture Practices
- **Brett Mackinnon**, Aquaculture Biosecurity Specialist in FAO, will introduce the Progressive Management Pathway for Improving Aquaculture Biosecurity

- **Qing Li**, Professor and Division Director, Aquatic Diseases Prevention and Control, National Fisheries Technology Extension Center, Chinese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, will speak on disease management and control in Chinese aquaculture
- **Nelly Isyagi**, Independent Consultant, will highlight Aquatic Animal Health Management in Africa
- **Edgar Brun**, Director for Aquatic Animal Health, Norwegian Veterinary Institute (Norway), will discuss the use of vaccines as prevention strategy and alternative to antimicrobials

And finally, closing remarks will be heard from **Manuel Barange**, Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division, FAO

I am now pleased to turn the floor over to **Melba Reantaso**, Aquaculture Officer at FAO, who will be moderating today's discussion. Thank you, Melba, the floor is now yours.