

FAO project boosts Kyrgyzstan's fisheries and aquaculture and amazes local producers!

An FAO Press tour took place in the Issyk-Kul province of Kyrgyzstan at end of June 2013 aimed at increasing awareness about challenges in fisheries and aquaculture as well as to demonstrate the positive impacts and results of the FAO project "*Support to Fishery and Aquaculture Management in the Kyrgyz Republic.*"



In 2010 the Central Asian region (including Azerbaijan) produced around 88 000 tons of fish, of which almost 63 000 tons were from inland waters and around 9 500 tons produced through aquaculture. Of this total amount, only 347 tons were produced in Kyrgyzstan. The national statistics do not take into account illegal fishing because of the moratorium on fishing in the largest lakes Issyk-Kul and Son Kul which has been operational since 2008.

Though aquaculture and fishing products contribute very little to Kyrgyzstan' food supply, some 1 kg per capita per year, there is significant potential to increase the productivity of aquaculture and develop fishing in the lakes, reservoirs and small irrigation waters of the country.

The FAO project has helped farmers form their own fisheries associations and provided training to support them in learning how to produce, amongst others, farm-made fish feed using locally available material.

The impact of the training continues to amaze staff working on the project. In many regions of the country, including very remote areas, new ponds are being constructed. Owners of functioning ponds began reconstructing and modernizing theirs. Farmers expressed their gratitude for all the help they have received in training as well as the provision of baby fish "fingerlings" that has been put at their disposal.

The project also provided a modern laboratory and field equipment (amounting to USD120.000) to the Institute of Biology of Academy of Science of Kyrgyzstan to enable scientists to carry out their research in the field.

During the press tour, representatives of national media visited several pond farms on the northern and southern sides of Issyk-Kul lake. Farmers explained their achievements and plans as well as the difficulties they continue to face in reviving the fisheries and aquaculture industries.

They also saw exactly how water quality and fish stock conditions were being monitored in Issyk-Kul lake, conducted jointly by FAO staff, specialists from the Department of Fisheries and scientists from the Institute of Biology of the National Academy of Science.