

Second Meeting of the Network of Aquaculture Centers in Central and Eastern Europe (NACEE)

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is an emerging region of Europe where aquaculture can play an important role in rural development. Knowledge and experience are available in various aquaculture research institutions in the region, however there are a series of constraints such as financial, infrastructure, language barriers, which hamper the utilisation of the research results and transfer of technologies and information. The R&D field has still a long road to make before being part of the European research; however, NACEE could contribute to this process. This was the background of the Second Meeting of the directors of NACEE which took place in Astrakhan, Russian Federation, 8-9 September 2005, in conjunction with the FAO/NACEE Expert Workshop on the Regional Aquaculture Review in CEE. The meeting was hosted by BIOS, the Research and Production Center for Sturgeon Breeding who proved to be an excellent local organiser of the event.

This meeting followed up on the formal founding of NACEE which took place in November last year. Over 40 people representing research institutions, universities, governments and international organisations and associations of 16 countries participated. NACEE has currently a membership of 31 institutions from 13 CEE countries. Several issues of interest for the network have been discussed and agreed, such as the progress and financial reports, the by-laws and Rules of Procedure of NACEE, future planned activities and follow-up steps. Although recently established, the network has already a web address (<http://agrowebcee.net/subnetwork/nacee/>), hosted by the AgroWeb network, in English and Russian, which is being continuously updated. The importance of the exchange of information among the NACEE members was emphasised as well as partnerships with already established international organisations such as EAS (European Aquaculture Society), NACA (Network of Aquaculture Centers in Asia-Pacific) and Eurofish. FAO's aquaculture service has provided support to NACEE through collaboration with HAKI, (Research Institute for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Irrigation, Szarvas/Hungary), the coordinating institution of the Network. Eurofish highlighted its activities and publications targeting in particular the challenges of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in CEE, and offered assistance, in particular in the areas of trade, fish processing, marketing and aquaculture and related training.

A workshop on aquaculture for CEE may be organised as a side event of the AQUA 2006 EAS/WAS conference, Firenze, Italy, 9-13 May 2006.

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