

# BAP Stands Out At Seafood Summit

## *‘Living, Breathing Program’ Surpasses Other Standards*



GAA's Peter Redmond (left) emphasized the wide scope and increasing depth of the Best Aquaculture Practices program at the Seafood Summit.

The Best Aquaculture Practices program made a strong showing during the Seafood Choices Alliance Seafood Summit 2010 in Paris, France, where the Global Aquaculture Alliance was a Bronze Sponsor.

In the February 2 session “Aquaculture Standards: Winner Take All?” GAA Vice President Peter Redmond drove home the fact that BAP is a “living, breathing program” that has been implemented at hundreds of aquaculture farms, hatcheries and processing plants around the world, while other programs are still in various stages of development.

In the session – shared with Nigel Garbutt of GlobalGAP and Jose Villalon of the World Wildlife Fund, who were representing their organizations’ aquaculture certification standards –

Redmond described the wide scope and increasing depth of the BAP program.

The comprehensive BAP standards cover environmental and social responsibility, as well as food safety and traceability. BAP certification for shrimp farms has been in place since 2003. Additional certifications for shrimp hatcheries, tilapia farms, channel catfish farms and seafood processing plants have also been implemented. BAP standards and certifications for feed mills and farms that raise *Pangasius* and other species are due this year.

Redmond said BAP is committed to complying with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization’s Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification and the Global Food Safety Initiative. The program also uses ISO-65 certification bodies for site audits.

BAP has been endorsed by retail, foodservice and seafood distribution companies in the United States, Europe and Japan. These include four of the five top U.S. retailers, as well as leading retailers and suppliers in Canada and the United Kingdom. Production from BAP-certified farms and plants is growing at nearly 25% annually.

The three presenters agreed that the marketplace can support several certification programs. Redmond said such market-driven competition would promote continued innovation.

The three-day Seafood Summit 2010 brought together global representatives from the seafood industry and conservation community for in-depth discussions on making the seafood marketplace more sustainable. Seafood Choices Alliance is an international program of SeaWeb that provides leadership and creates opportunities for change across the seafood industry and ocean conservation community.

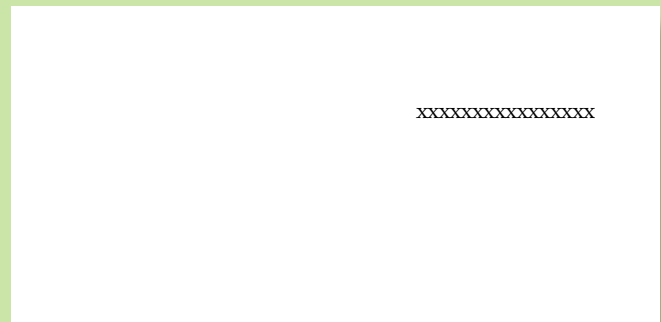
## March 31 Deadline For BAP *Pangasius* Comments

Interested parties must submit comments by March 31 on the new Best Aquaculture Practices standards for *Pangasius* farms posted for public comment at [www.gaalliance.org/bap/comments.php](http://www.gaalliance.org/bap/comments.php).

Comments can be made via the electronic form or sent by e-mail or fax to BAP Standards Coordinator Daniel Lee ([dangaille@aol.com](mailto:dangaille@aol.com), +44-1248-716729) or Technical Committee Chairman Philippe Serene ([sereneconco@vnn.vn](mailto:sereneconco@vnn.vn), +84-8-5121-259).

Two draft documents – the standards/guidelines and accompanying audit form – are provided in PDF format. The first file outlines the standards, as well as the reasons for their requirements and how best to comply with them. The draft audit form indicates how auditors review *Pangasius* farms for compliance with the BAP standards.

In addition to social and environmental responsibility, the *Pangasius* standards encompass food safety and traceability. Audit questions address biodiversity protection and quantify water quality in pond effluents. They also require controlled use of chemical treatments and monitoring of



feed ingredients from marine sources. Another standard specifies ongoing management and proper disposal of pond sludge.

Developed under the guidance of the Standards Oversight Committee of the Global Aquaculture Alliance, the new BAP standards apply only to facilities that raise *Pangasius* in ponds. The BAP certification program has separate standards for channel catfish farms.

# BAP Program Welcomes New Committee Members



Dr. David Little

## Standards Oversight Committee

Dr. David Little, recently appointed as professor of aquatic resource development at the Institute of Aquaculture, University of Stirling, has joined the Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) Standards Oversight Committee (SOC).

Little contributes to core programming in sustainable aquaculture, aquatic pathobiology and veterinary studies in the areas of production and reproduction/genetics. He coordinates several components of the sustainable aquaculture program and is responsible for a postgraduate program in aquatic resource development for students in Bangladesh and Vietnam. He has long-term experience in both development and commercial-oriented aquaculture in Asia.

Little's Systems Group links rural communities of fishing people and aquaculture producers with laboratory and field research, academic and commercial analysis, and institutional policy and strategy. Its projects range from advice on production problems and developing systems for new species to understanding social and economic systems, and market planning.

## ALDI USA Adopts BAP Certification For Seafood Products

The Global Aquaculture Alliance has added another supermarket chain to the growing list of retailers and distributors that have adopted Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) certification.

One of the fastest-growing retailers in the United States, ALDI USA recently launched its first set of private-label aquaculture seafood products from BAP-certified facilities.

"ALDI is actively engaged in industry initiatives on sustainable

## Feed Association, Bangladesh Foundation Join GAA

As part of its 2010 membership drive, the Global Aquaculture Alliance has traded membership benefits with two new aquaculture associations.

New GAA Association Member American Feed Industry Association is the world's largest organization devoted to representing the business and regulatory interests of the animal feed industry and its suppliers. Based in Arlington, Virginia, USA, its members include more than 500 U.S. and international companies and associations representing feed manufacturers, ingredient suppliers, equipment manufacturers and other suppliers.

Bangladesh Shrimp and Fish Foundation, another new Association Member, is a non-profit research and advocacy organization dedicated to supporting Bangladesh's shrimp and fish aquaculture industry. The foundation's mission is to work for growth in aquaculture that is economically, socially and envi-

"Certification can potentially bring either benefits or impediments to developing country producers, including the smallholders who have pioneered efforts to bring farmed seafood to the market," Little said. "I hope I can contribute to standards that bring benefits to the diverse communities in which aquaculture has become an important way of life."

One position remains open on the Standards Oversight Committee. Four candidates representing academic institutions in Asia are being considered for the position.

## Mussel Farm Technical Committee

Research scientist Cyr Couturier has been chosen to chair a new Mussel Farm Technical Committee for the BAP program. Additional members of the committee are currently being identified. Couturier will help develop draft standards for his committee.

Couturier is chairman of the masters aquaculture program at the Centre for Aquaculture and Seafood Development at the Marine Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland. He has 29 years experience in applied research, project development and management, teaching and extension services in shellfish and finfish aquaculture. Couturier is a Safe Quality Food expert and has expertise in HACCP and quality management programs for seafood.

Couturier teaches in a wide variety of programs, and is currently project leader on several research and development projects with partners in the shellfish and finfish culture industries in Newfoundland and elsewhere. He has worked around the world in development, trade missions, extension and technology transfer programs.

Couturier is president of the Aquaculture Association of Canada and the Canadian Aquaculture Portal Society, director for the Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance and a past president of the Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association. He is also a technical advisor to several government departments on sustainable aquaculture issues.

seafood," Daniel Malechuk, director for corporate purchasing of seafood, said. "We support the BAP certification standards and ... look forward to the continued evolution of the BAP program and its efforts to promote sustainable aquaculture."

ALDI is a German-owned company with U.S. headquarters in Batavia, Illinois. A leader in the international grocery retailing, it has more than 1,000 stores in over 30 U.S. states.

ronmentally sustainable. It achieves that mission through dialogues, conferences, research, demonstrations and advocacies.

GAA's membership initiative – which involves a reciprocal exchange of benefits for membership, publications and meeting registration – aims to improve communication with associations around the world whose interests parallel those of GAA. The goals are to exchange information, improve mutual understanding of issues and coordinate programs.

"Together we can be more effective and have a greater impact locally as well as internationally," GAA President George Chamberlain said in his letter to candidate organizations. "We hope to begin building the relationship between our organizations and interlinking the entire global aquaculture community." It is through unity that we can achieve our brightest future."

# Preaudits Can Help Ensure Compliance With BAP

## Stephen G. Newman, Ph.D.

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Certification is increasingly being adopted by many industrial sectors as a critical tool for optimizing quality. Essentially, certification provides a guarantee that facilities adhere to specific methods that are typically developed by a consensus of parties who understand the processes involved.

In that aquaculture is in many respects the last major global shift from a hunting to a farming paradigm, the concept of certification as applied to aquaculture is still in its formative stages. Standards take time to develop and require disparate groups with sometimes divergent interests to reach compromises to create universally acceptable and meaningful standards. Furthermore, market forces must realize the value of these standards and encourage consumers to embrace them, as well.

## Aquaculture Certification

The Global Aquaculture Alliance has been the driving force in the creation of the Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) certification program that served as the basis for the first certification systems in routine use. The Aquaculture Certification Council, now known as the BAP Certification Management Group, was

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created to ensure that these certifications were carried out in a consistent and transparent manner.

Like other systems, the basic framework for BAP certification includes a series of standards with standardized operating procedures and a paper/electronic trail that documents all phases of a process in a manner by which a third party can validate the performance of the client to the standards.

## Audit Challenges

Various features are consistent for most certification audits. One thing that happens repeatedly is that first-time auditees are not really prepared for the audit. While they fill in the application forms and answer all of the questions, usually positively, they often do not understand the depth of the questions. This becomes quite apparent during the audit.

The misunderstandings create stress, and often facility management does not realize there may be substantial additional work required to comply. Sometimes the situation can prevent compliance within the anticipated (and required) time frame, resulting in lost sales and other related problems.

## Revised Process

In its ongoing effort to align with the Global Food Safety Initiative and other international standards programs, the BAP program changed the manner in which audits are performed early this year. Instead of using BAP-trained evaluators, audits will be performed by auditors of inspectorates certified by the International Organization for Standardization.

This has resulted in a major shift in the nature of the audits. Whereas auditors previously could assist auditees with simple recommendations that pointed them in the right direction on compliance, this is no longer allowed. Auditors cannot help auditees resolve non-compliance issues. They are on their own.

## Preaudit Assistance

Establishing a working relationship with a competent individual prior to an audit can help ensure that companies understand what needs to be done and lessens the likelihood of problems during and after the audit. Even if full compliance is not achieved at the time of the audit, fixes should be relatively easy, and companies then have a resource upon which to draw for assistance should some clarification be required.

Preaudits are valuable tools that assess what is required to meet auditing standards. The way they work is simple. A mock audit is undertaken, and unlike the real audit, the auditee is given constructive advice and suggestions on how best to proceed as each component of the audit is addressed. Typically, a report that details issues and provides further resources is provided.

All in all, the more information that auditees have prior to audits, the greater the chances are that they will be in a high degree of compliance. Knowledgeable aquaculturists understand that having a non-biased third party periodically evaluate production systems can result in significant improvements in productivity and profitability, and better understanding of the systems as a whole. Similar reviews of processing plants, farms or hatcheries conducted prior to comprehensive certification audits can help ensure that the path toward certification is a smoother and easier one.

*Editor's Note: Dr. Stephen Newman has completed dozens of audits for the BAP program and routinely does technical operational audits on different types of aquaculture operations.*