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POSITION PAPER

Proposal for changes in the list of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture (Annex V of Regulation 708/2007)

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Background

Aquaculture is globally a fast-growing sector where innovation and new opportunities are being explored as a result of the continuous rising consumption of seafood and the stable or declining supply from the capture fisheries sector. In order to adapt the production to the increasing demand and market conditions and safeguard the supply of safe, nutritious, high quality and sustainable seafood at European level, it is important for the aquaculture industry to be allowed to further diversify the reared species, as long as not compromising biodiversity or any other environmental value.

Since the late 19th century at least 69 alien species have been introduced, or relocated, into Europe for aquaculture[1]. Three of these (rainbow trout, Pacific cupped oyster and Japanese carpet shell), have commonly been used in aquaculture for a long time, are acclimated to the European natural environment and are nowadays some of the top aquaculture species farmed in the EU.

The experience has shown that the introduction for aquaculture of alien species in a controlled manner and after thorough environmental assessments poses a limited environmental risk and can be beneficial for the industry, the society and the consumer.

Within this context, FEAP's proposes to the European Commission to review and update the existing legal framework (last revised in 2008) governing aquaculture practices in relation to alien and locally absent species and assess, in particular, the eligibility of new species that will be officially requested from the Members States concerned and include them to the Annex IV of Regulation 708/2007.

The current legal framework defines as 'alien species':

a) a species or subspecies of an aquatic organism occurring outside its known natural range and the area of its natural dispersal potential;

b) polyploid organisms, and fertile artificially hybridised species irrespective of their natural range or dispersal

[1] 2012, K. Lapointeet al. Invasive Aquatic Species of Europe. Distribution, Impacts and Management.