



AQUATIC ANIMAL FEED: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Global demand for seafood is increasing, and can only be met through aquaculture. However, concerns have been expressed on the sustainability of aquatic animal farming, as traditionally marine raw materials such as fish meal and fish oil are major components of aquaculture feeds. Reduction fisheries, which provide the raw materials for fish meal and oil production, although increasingly well managed, rely on wild fish stocks, which are limited resources. Significant efforts have therefore been devoted by the feed industry towards reducing reliance on marine ingredients. Raw material characterization, identification of novel feed ingredients and an improved understanding of critical nutrients that limit our ability to replace fish meal and fish oil all need to be addressed. Research on the possible effects of innovative feed formulations on fish health and welfare has demonstrated that properly balanced formulations do not negatively affect animal health. The feed industry acknowledges the importance of international standards of the OIE and Codex in formulating feed for the production of safe food products. New research findings allow the industry to formulate feed more efficiently and to reduce the input of marine raw materials, so that fish farmers can become “net fish protein producers” and thereby ensure a sustainable supply of high quality protein based on healthy seafood for a growing world population.

Keywords: aquaculture feed – sustainability – food security; OIE and Codex standards