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International Artemia Aquaculture Consortium may launch this year

18 January 2022

By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Experts collaborating on interdisciplinary approach to address critical *artemia* issues and opportunities

With artemia being a critical live food source, leading experts in artemia research are planning to launch a collaborative International Artemia Aquaculture Consortium (IAAC) later in 2022. Dr. Patrick Sorgeloos, emeritus professor of aquaculture at Ghent University, outlined the possibility of striking a consortium at the Global Conference on Aquaculture in September 2021.

“It is the intention to have this on the agenda of the next FAO COFI Subcommittee on Aquaculture in May 2022, at which we expect the formal recognition by FAO member states of this international consortium,” Sorgeloos told the *Advocate*.

The idea for this new initiative was first discussed in November 2019, during an aquaculture meeting in Kuala Lumpur with leading experts. Since then, the organizers have approached artemia experts worldwide and received “much enthusiasm” in pursuing plans to strike a consortium.

“With this new initiative, we hope to facilitate the setting up of new joint research programs, the organization of workshops and training sessions, and ultimately call upon the attention of the international organizations to formally recognize this new ‘International Artemia Aquaculture Consortium,’” according to a **statement published on the IAAC website** (<https://imb.umt.edu.my/?>



A vessel harvests artemia cysts in the Great Salt Lake (Utah, USA), one of the world's largest sources of the important brine shrimp. Image by T. Bosteels, courtesy of FAO.

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(<http://info.globalseafood.org/goal-2022-save-the-date>).

With the expansion of hatchery production, the demand for artemia cysts continues to increase. It's estimated that annual consumption has reached 3,500 to 4,000 tonnes (3,800 to 4,400 metric tons). This underpins the production of over 900 billion crustacean postlarvae and fish fry by a hatchery industry valued at more than (U.S.) \$2 billion and the final production of over 10 million tonnes of high-value aquaculture species.

Approximately 90 percent of the current artemia production is harvested from inland salt lakes, which are under threat of drying up – a situation that could worsen in the future with climate change. The future of the hatchery industry could be at risk and requires urgent attention.



Is a 'baby food' bottleneck looming for aquaculture?

Global aquaculture, particularly farmed shrimp, depends on artemia for hatchery feeds. Supplies meet current needs, but growth will require alternatives.



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A new international interdisciplinary approach is needed to address these artemia issues and opportunities. Launched 40 years ago, the International Study on Artemia (an international interdisciplinary study of artemia species and strains) resulted in new knowledge and developments in fish and crustacean aquaculture. Experts hope that this new initiative will “guarantee a more sustainable provision of artemia,” as well as explore critical issues and opportunities, such as the conservation of artemia biodiversity or studying the impact of climate change on artemia production.

In the interim, [a website \(https://imb.umt.edu.my/?page_id=5516\)](https://imb.umt.edu.my/?page_id=5516) has been created to provide “a platform for exchange where we can share information about the activities of our present membership, post new literature and other information dealing with artemia, announce and invite participants for specific workshops and webinars.”

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