

Industry launches first-of-its-kind feed formulation database

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With aquaculture's clear importance to future food supply, it's surprising to United States Soybean Export Council (USSEC) Southeast Asia Technical Director Lukas Manomaitis, that a standard aquaculture feed formulation database had never existed, unlike past efforts with terrestrial livestock.

"We don't have the nutritional information we need to do the best job for formulation of diets," he told **Fish Farming International**. "We need to focus a lot more on working with formulators and see what we can do to help that industry."

So Manomaitis took the initiative, developing the concept and identifying funding for a consortium led by University of Guelph aquaculture expert Dominique Bureau, to create the [Asian Aquaculture Feed Formulation Database \(AAFFD\)](#), which lists 293 different ingredients for more than 20 different species groups, including tilapia, pangasius and carp. It's currently focused on Asia "because it's the primary area of production," he said and made up of two sub-databases. One of those is for different aquaculture species nutrient specifications and the other is for ingredient specifications — and the information is specific to aquaculture species, not a modified version of other livestock databases.

USAID, the Canadian government and other stakeholders also helped with the process, he said.

"The idea is to target a range of species that are primary production species and some others that are of interest to Asia," Manomaitis explained of lesser-farmed species on the list, such as abalone and sturgeon.

The AAFFD had an initial rollout, with seven workshops held in five nations, including Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. The team worked with feedmill formulators to run a training program and "do a formulation in real time," he explained. "We were able to see if there were any weaknesses in the current stage of the AAFFD."

The workshops seemed to help: Of the 85 attendees who participated in an evaluation, 89 percent said it provided value-added content that will help them improve technical capabilities and knowledge, 90 percent said it increased their understanding of different approaches for aquaculture formulation and 91 percent said they believe having a standardized formulation database to benchmark against and train with would help feedmills.

Although it is in the initial stages, Manomaitis is passionate about continuing to make the database more comprehensive and then continuously working to keep it up-to-date.

"A database does not make a formulator, I want to be very clear on this," he said. "The value of a formulator is understanding all the issues around creating a good formulation. For example, the value of using different ingredients, understanding the feed production equipment and working with sales and technical staff to talk to customers.

"But, in order to have good formulations and develop good formulators, a good aquaculture formulation

database is something that we really need as a basic tool in our industry for benchmarking and training.”

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