Update on the disease situation in aquatic organisms in the Mediterranean

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Abstract

The Mediterranean basin represents an interesting area for aquaculture. The production in the area includes historically established freshwater aquaculture farming of salmonid (rainbow trout, brook trout and charr) and cyprinids.

Marine Aquaculture comprising land based hatcheries and sea cages has developed in the last 20 years and contributes yearly with a production of approximately 315.000 Tonnes of European Sea bass and Gilthead sea bream.

The aim of this initiative, which started in 2012, is to set up a platform that can link authorities and stakeholders aiming to target the main sanitary issues in the basin and focus future research activities on these topics. Currently two large initiatives named MEDAID and Performfish, to support Marine Mediterranean Aquaculture, have been funded by EU and are aiming to improve Key Perfomance Indicators (KPI) of the industry.

Health management represents a key aspect for development and sustainability of the industry; in order to map health issues and infectious diseases in the area, a simple questionnaire asking to rank the three most important diseases for marine and fresh water sector was delivered to a panel of experts.

Contributions from 13 experts were obtained about disease situation in the Mediterranean basin for 2017. Data will be presented and discussed showing comparison with previous years focusing both on important known diseases and emerging pathogens.

Data and presentation will be uploaded on the website of the EURL for fish diseases at the following link: http://www.eurl-fish.eu/Activities/annual-meetings

Questions and comments:

Brit Hjeltnes: *"I have a comment about the way of scoring the diseases. We previously used the questionnaire in the same way, but found out that it is better to give each disease a score instead of prioritizing them. The latter can lead to overestimation of impact of some diseases. Are you thinking about changing the system?"*

Niccoló Vendramin: *"Yes, that is definitely a possibility. I think the point here is that when I plot the results, there may be a bias in that one respondent may be answering based on 10 farms, and another based on one farm. However, I am not sure how to deal with this, as there are also things like confidentiality to consider, and presenting the data like this means that everyone is acknowledged for their work, but is anonymous."*

Brit Hjeltnes: *"You mentioned that parasitic problems are building up, and that it could be linked to build-up of organic material under the cages. For many years in Norway it has been mandatory to have rotation of*

sites, but that is impossible in the Mediterranean. However, it is so important to change site, and that will improve the situation."

Niccoló Vendramin: *"It is not all-in-all-out in the Mediterranean as you do wisely in Norway. There are some situations where there are several farms existing in the same bay, and each often have different generations, so for example in a farm there are 12 cages, and four are 0+, four are 1+ and four are 2+. That is an interesting epidemiological challenge."*

Brit Hjeltnes: *"It is the same as what you do in agriculture. You do not grow potatoes in the same site year after year - then you are asking for trouble."*