

PRESS RELEASE – SEPTEMBRE 28<sup>th</sup> 2011

## **APROMAR and Ctaqua present the study “Proposals for the promotion of meagre consumption in Spain”**

Last week, the Andalusian Aquaculture Technology Centre, Ctaqua, presented the market study “*Proposals for the promotion of meagre consumption in Spain*”, commissioned by the Spanish Association of Marine Aquaculture Producers (APROMAR) and financed by the Regulation and Organisation Fund for the Fish and Marine Cultures Market (FROM) and the association itself.

The presentation was held in the conference room of Ctaqua’s new building and was presided over by Isabel Hernández Encinas, secretary of FROM; Fernando Torrent, president of APROMAR; and Lázaro Rosa, president of Ctaqua.

This study was developed in order to obtain a diagnosis of the present situation of meagre production and its market in Spain, and to assess its potential and consumer perception. Ctaqua’s team, headed by project manager María Avivar, designed and worked on the project with collaboration and advising from Juan Manuel Fernández Aldana, expert in aquaculture with extensive experience in meagre farming and commercialisation.

In the presentation of the study's results and conclusions, María Avivar highlighted that the flavour, texture, possibilities for transformation and versatility for a wide variety of culinary uses make meagre a good candidate for diversification of the Spanish aquaculture sector. Apart from these advantages, this fish is also low in fat, presents high levels of Omega-3 fatty acids and has a long shelf life.

However, an important challenge lies ahead: improving public awareness about this species. Although meagre is well known by wholesalers, large supermarkets and retailers, only final consumers in certain areas are aware of the advantages of this species, including Andalusia, the Canary Islands, Galicia and the coasts of Catalonia and the Levant region. The study proposes the development of promotion campaigns and bases its differentiation on the quality brand "Crianza del Mar".

In the business aspect, Juan Manuel Fernández Aldana pointed out the importance of developing meagre in Spain because it represents a possibility of diversification for companies currently dedicated to sea bass and sea bream production. In this sense, he explained that the production centres are ready to supply sufficient quantities of juveniles and specific food for the species, and that production and handling is similar to that of sea bream and sea bass.

Mr. Fernández also explained that the study proposes a positioning strategy that involves reaching 5,000 TN by 2015. The proposed formats are 1 to 2 kilos for large supermarkets, wholesalers and final consumers; and 2 to 3 kilos for restaurants. During a second phase, starting in 2015 and ending in 2020,

production would be increased to 10,000 TN and efforts would be focused on reaching final consumers and catering businesses through product transformation.

Fernández Aldana stressed that although the possibilities for growth of the meagre market in Spain are potentially high, final consumers must first be made aware of this species and its advantages, and supply must be adjusted to meet potential demand.

The study addressed the ten sectors involved in meagre production and commercialisation, from its farming to its consumption; including production companies, wholesalers, large supermarkets, retailers, the hotel and restaurant sector and the more than 400 final consumers who were surveyed in Spain. In total, more than 800 actions were carried out including telephone surveys, on-site and electronic questionnaires, and observations in points of sale.

## About Ctaqua

Ctaqua works for the aquaculture sector in various lines that include Environment, Food and Nutrition, New Species, Pathology, Applied Engineering and Commercialisation, with excellent results.

With finished projects in the lines mentioned above, this year Ctaqua reinforces the services it offers with the implementation of new facilities in El Puerto de Santa María, which will allow for the development of new projects in the test centres, workshops and laboratories equipped with the latest technology.

The modern two-story building houses the nutrition, diversification, mollusc, crustacean, phytoplankton and zooplankton rooms on the ground floor. The microbiology and pathology labs, transformation room and the engineering room are also located on this level. The technical offices, physicochemical, materials and food technology labs are located on the upper level.

The premises will allow Ctaqua to consolidate its work and become a reference in R+D+I management for the aquaculture sector, as well as a driving and essential force to generate added value for companies in the sector.

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