WORLD FISHERIES DAY 2021 AWARDS

Best Inland Fish Farmer – Mohd. Asif Siddiqui

BACKGROUND

Mohd. Asif Siddiqui is a native of Gangwara, Barabanki district, Uttar Pradesh. He completed his studies from his home state, Uttar Pradesh and after completion of his graduation he was working in the real estate sector till 2015. His family's main occupation was agriculture and when they incurred huge loses for 2 consecutive years on which he explored other farming activities which would yield high returns on investment.

He came in contact with one of his close friends Shri. Parvesh who was doing fish farming by adopting RAS technology in cemented tanks and learnt that Shri. Parvesh is getting handsome income. Seeing his friend's profitable fish business, Mohd. Siddique ventured into fish farming in the year 2015. At present, he is the proprietor of an enterprise called "**A.Q Fisheries**".

Picture 1: Mohd. Asif Siddiqui in his farm

In order to be a successful entrepreneur and improve his knowledge, Mohd. Asif attended various training programmes organized by the Department of Fisheries, U.P. and other fisheries organizations. In 2016, he completed a certification course on startups and innovation in Agri entrepreneurship from National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR), Lucknow. Additionally, he underwent NFDB sponsored training programs on Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) conducted by NBFGR.

JOURNEY IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR

He constructed 15 earthen ponds in one acre area and started intensive culture of Pangasius species with a stocking density of 1.50 lakh per acre. In a span of 6-7 months, he harvested 62 tonnes of fish which gave him the confidence to further convert his agricultural land into ponds for fish farming. Currently, he has 66 ponds spread over 6 acres of land out of which, he is utilizing 4 ponds for nursery and the remaining 62 ponds for grow out culture. The main source of water is a tube-well and a borewell.

PRODUCTION PRACTICES

Mohd. Asif chose Pangasius as the candidate species for high density culture because of its high growth rate, short crop period and less requirement of water for the culture. There were very few people in the fish farming business and demand for Pangasius was quite relatively high in Uttar Pradesh.

Picture 2: Construction of earthen ponds in his agricultural land

He procures seed (6-8 lakhs fry per annum) from West Bengal at the rate of Rs. 3 per seed and further rears in the nursery for 20-25 days. The mortality of seed observed during nursery rearing varies from 5-20%. He follows Best Management Practices (BMP) during

Picture 3: High density culture of pangasius species in his ponds

nursery rearing and as well as during grow out culture period. Mohd. Asif uses pelleted feed procured locally and the Feed Conversion Ratio (FCR) is 1:1.5. The cost of production works to around Rs. 80/Kg and the average selling price per kg is Rs. 100/-. Equipped with sound technical know-how, Mr. Asif has stocked around 13.50 lakhs fry and produced around 446 tonnes of fish in the last 3 years which his earned him a net profit of Rs. 144.00 lakhs.

He elucidates that in a properly managed fish ponds, ammonia seldom accumulates. However, ammonia can have "sublethal" effects - such as reduced growth, poor feed conversion, and lower disease resistance. Therefore, Mr. Asif drains out the water from the pond at regular intervals. He uses water sanitizer and salt to reduce the bacterial load in the pond and regularly monitors fish health and its growth by test sampling at an interval of 20-25 days. As a result of all diligent efforts and putting his learnings to practice, Mr. Asif has learnt to use less water compared to the conventional farming.

Picture 4: Separate Inlet outlet being installed in each of the pond

REUSE OF WATER AND GENERATION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mohd. Asif follows waste management efforts by reusing the drained water from the fish ponds to irrigate the neighbouring agricultural fields. The water from the fish pond contains higher organic matter and rich in nutrients. The reuse of pond water for agriculture produce has helped to reduce the water consumption by 30%. In the year 2018, Mohd. Asif received a subsidy of Rs. 6 lakhs from the Fisheries Department, Government of Uttar Pradesh for the installation of 30KW solar plant and fixation of aerators in the ponds. A 5 HP solar pump operates with the solar energy which has not only minimized the dependency on electricity but also reduced the cost of production.

Picture 5: Solar system installed in his fish farm

KNOWLEDGE GAINING AND SHARING

Mohd. Asif had learnt a lot by attending a number of training programmes and interactive sessions conducted by various national institutes, organizations and Government Departments. Delegates from various renowned national/international organisations like World Bank, Asian Development Bank, NABARD, NBFGR have visited his farm to witness the culture practices. Several Colleges and Universities are also organizing exposure visits to his farm to understand the best practices adopted by Mohd. Asif. He also shares his knowledge on fish culture with local farmers and encourages enthusiastic farmers to take up fish farming as part of their livelihood activities.

Picture 6: Delegates from World Bank

Picture 7: Delegates from USA

Picture 8: Capt. Vikas Gupta, Chairman UPCAR visit to his farm

Picture 9: Delegates from Asian Development Bank and U.P. Fisheries Department

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