

CATFISH BY-PRODUCTS

IMPROVING VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS AND DEVELOPMENT FROM VIETNAM CATFISH PROCESSING BY-PRODUCTS

Funding granted: AUD 478,824

CONTEXT

Vietnam's Tra Catfish (*Pangasius sp.*) industry in Mekong Delta region has been reported to account for the production of about 1.42 million tons in recent years, and export income of greater than USD 1.77 billion. It employs over 200,000 rural poor workers with the majority being women and girls (VASEP, 2019), primarily in the processing sector.

Catfish processing by-products represent greater than 60-70% of the fish biomass, not including blood and water-soluble proteinaceous fractions. Rapid development of the Tra Catfish fillet market, market competition, and tightening environmental regulation have stimulated interest in the industry to improve and update processing the historically perceived "waste by-product" technologies and management.

SOLUTION

The project aims to improve value added product recovery and development from fishery processing by-products, with an initial focus on Tra Catfish - fishmeal nutritional value and options for improving capture and quality of oils/proteinaceous fractions from processing water discharges. Processing by-products include head, bones, fin, skin and organs and are predominately used for fish meal, and other discards are used for fertiliser.

Laboratory and pilot plant facilities of APOTEC - RIA2 Institute will be used to conduct the project. Several seafood processing factories/fishmeal producers/feed processors in the Mekong Delta region have agreed to collaborate with the work - including sampling, monitoring, equipment and technical staff.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Increase the value of catfish by-products, help catfish farmers/processors to make more income;
2. Reduce negative environmental impacts from the catfish processing industry;
3. Application of catfish fishmeal to replace marine fishmeal in aquaculture production will contribute to reducing the pressure of high feed cost for farmers;
4. Enhance circular economy model in aquaculture and food processing sector.

This initiative is funded under the competitive grant work stream of Aus4Innovation, a flagship four year, AUD 11 million partnership program designed to help strengthen the Vietnamese innovation system and prepare for Vietnam's economic and digital future. The program provides funds to scale already tested ideas to address emerging challenges or opportunities in any sector of Vietnam's innovation system.

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