

The finfish raised by the Thai aquaculture industry is primarily for domestic consumption except for Sand Goby which is almost exclusively exported because of the high price it commands in Hong Kong and China. Some catfish are also exported to service the South East Asian refugee communities around the world.

Seabass has been produced in shrimp ponds along the coast of Thailand for more than 40 years. The traditional culture method involved the collection of naturally occurring seabass fry from estuaries, mangrove swamps, and shrimp ponds. In 1973 the Thai Department of Fisheries succeeded in artificially spawning seabass. This development led to a rapid increase in the commercialization of seabass production. Seabass fry are also exported to fish farmers in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan.

Grouper is reared in floating seacages in the southwestern provinces of Thailand.

Freshwater species such as catfish, carp, tilapia, gourami and sand goby are major sources of revenue for the industry in Thailand. Sand Goby is raised exclusively for export because of the high prices it commands in markets such as Hong Kong and China.

Green Mussels, which are larger and milder than the Blue Mussels raised in Canada and Blood Cockles are the two dominant mollusc species raised in Thailand. Horse mussels and some oysters are also commercially grown in Thailand.

2.6 Canadian Business Potential

The aquaculture industry in Thailand is very labour intensive and, due to the availability of inexpensive labour, will not be overly predisposed to expensive technology which is aimed at labour savings.

The government of Thailand has noted the urgent need for a seafarming management system in order to effectively manage the coastal area of the country to provide the maximum benefit, not only to the aquaculture industry but to other potential users as well.

The culture of seaweeds in Thailand, primarily *Gracilaria* spp., is still largely at the experimental stage. The government has identified the need to research suitable sites for commercial seaweed production.

Aquaculture training is also an identified need especially in the area of mollusc seed production.

Fish disease is a major problem for the industry in Thailand. Some chemicals and antibiotics are currently used, although there is a concern that these are often overused due to the claims and promotion of the products by the distributors. Vaccines have not been used to a great extent because of the concern for the price of the vaccine in comparison to the value of the fish being vaccinated.