

PD-APP-304

**PROEXAG II**



EXPORT INDUSTRY TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT PROJECT (AGRICULTURAL COMPONENT)

**ATTENDANCE TO FPX SHRIMP SYMPOSIUM**

Assignment Number: ST-159

PREPARED BY:

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THROUGH

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UNDER THE AUSPICES OF:

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**United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association  
Trip Report  
April 24-30, 1993**

John M. McClung  
Vice President for Government Relations and Public Affairs

I. Dates and Destination: April 24-30, Tegucigalpa, Honduras

II. Purpose of Travel

To assist the Federacion de Productores y Exportadores Agropecuarios y Agroindustriales de Honduras and the Asociacion Nacional de Acuicultores de Honduras to improve and expand the Simposio Centroamericano Sobre Camaron Cultivado. Following the completion of the symposium, a verbal assessment was provided to Dr. Richard Hopper of FPX.

III. Persons Contacted

In addition to Dr. Hopper and other staff of FPX, persons interviewed included Howard Newman of Salt Lake Brine Shrimp; Michael Callejas and Kent Sharp of Seafood Packaging Inc.; M.D. Rodgers of Aquatic Eco Systems, Inc.; M. Carcamo of M & W Pump Corp.; Frederico Cox of Bio-Marine, Inc; Carlos Ortiz of Taser International Crop. and East Texas Feeds; Carroll Fox of East Texas Feeds; David Burris of Burris Mill & Feed, Inc.; and Dewey Bobinger and E.T Smith of Mississippi Trading Co., Ltd.

**Activities and Accomplishments**

1. Spent most of two days interviewing trade show participants to determine their opinion of the trade show and the educational sessions.
2. Spent several hours with FPX staff, gathering their feedback on problems and opportunities they saw as a result of putting on the symposium.
3. Met with numerous Honduran shrimp farmers at the symposium and during the facilities tours to discuss their needs and objectives.

4. Held frequent discussions with Produce Marketing Association representative Nancy Tucker to synchronize observations, recommendations, etc.

5. Debriefed Dr. Hopper, other FPX staff

#### Observations and Recommendations

Nancy and I determined that the first objective was to identify the goals of the symposium, which seemed to us to include the following, in no particular order:

- Expand the number and quality of Honduran and other Central American farms engaged in aquaculture, and particularly shrimp culture.

- Provide information transfer, including: technical information, marketing information (quality perception) , and regulatory information (i.e., environmental, food safety, and trade regulations).

- Expand the show so that it is truly regional (Central American) or even Latin American.

- Ensure profitability for show, thereby lessening FPX dependence on government grants, other revenue sources.

The second objective was to clarify the demographics--who participates? We believe the target audience for the educational sessions includes fish farmers, fish processors, investors, allied industries suppliers, financial institutions, transporters, technicians/scientists, and product buyers. This latter category in turn includes brokers, end users, wholesalers, and various exporters. A significant observation here is that the allied industries representatives currently dominate the exhibits, as there are virtually no shrimp or other products of farming activities on display.

The target audience for exhibitors includes: feed manufacturers and sellers; packaging materials suppliers; equipment suppliers including harvesting, pumping, handling, transporting, refrigerating, etc.; laboratory services, financial services, and transportation providers.

Potential: We estimated show growth in the range of 25-50 percent is realistic before the next symposium, should FPX determine on an expansion strategy moving somewhat beyond the current highly technical theme. It seemed to us that an additional 10 booths and another 100 participants would be quite conservative projections. Dr. Hopper and the FPX staff believe a clearly technical show is in the industry's interests at least for the time being.

**Facilities:** One serious limiting factor would be hotel and foodservice limitations in Tegucigalpa (or San Pedro Sula, should there be any interest in moving there). The FPX staff believes there is adequate good quality hotel availability in Tegucigalpa for an additional 100-200 participants. In this regard, we determined the educational session participants would need a meeting room exceeding current capacity by 75-100 seats (a requirement that could possibly be avoided by holding concurrent workshops). This expansion might prove easier were there to be a few non-technical workshops focusing on such matters as marketing strategies, business and management experiences, and even motivational speakers. In this regard, non or semi-technical panels--perhaps revolving around first-person experiences--on equipment, product handling, feeding, water quality maintenance, financing, and marketing might be popular.

A second recommendation in this respect would be to consider a non-technical keynote address, and a third is to put greater emphasis on feedback/evaluation procedures from symposium registrants.

The trade show might require space for 10-20 additional booths, which might be accomplished in part by converting from the current wood panel construction to pipe-and-drape booths (10 X 10). In addition, refreshments should be provided regularly in the trade show area, and logistical considerations (booth services, shipments to exhibit area, electrical service, refrigeration, etc.) should be improved.

A number of exhibitor complained that better exhibitor communications and treatment--especially access to the educational sessions--would be a significant improvement. They also were emphatic in saying that the second symposium this April was much better organized and run than the maiden show two years ago. A number of exhibitors recommended having someone on the show floor who would have responsibility for trying to meet their needs, and Dr. Hopper indicated he would like to employ someone at least half time to concentrate on managing the show.

**Competition:** An interesting issue is competition for convention goers given a considerable number of other fish production and marketing shows. While there are other shows in Latin America (Pesca in Mexico in July, the Ecuador Shrimp Congress in October, and the Chile Aquaculture Show (mainly salmonids) for example) the consensus is that there is a niche for the Honduran show, particularly for shrimp but also, to a much lesser extent, for other aquaculture products such as tilapia and even ornamental fish.

Promotion and Publicity: Nancy Tucker and I strongly recommended a more concerted effort to secure attendance by relevant trade press and even general media, as the press was almost entirely absent from this show; we recommended FPX acquire an improved media list, possibly from the World Aquaculture Show managers (that show also is largely technical). further, it was recommended that a more vigorous effort be undertaken to expand mailings, advertisements, etc., directed at the media, and to arrange tradeouts with the media.

Similarly, we recommended a more concerted effort to find corporate or other sponsorship for meeting events, tours, etc.

Miscellaneous: I did spend quite some time discussing the symposium situation with Dr. George Chamberlain of Ralston Purina (headquartered in Mexico D.F.). George is on the board of the World Aquaculture Society and would be very interested in working with the Hondurans in growing their shrimp symposium. Interestingly (to me), the WAS has a significant problem in that, while the organization is highly respected, it has one trade show a year and that can be anywhere in the world. This year, for example, it was scheduled for Spain. Because of travel restrictions and the like, relatively few members attend some annual meetings. George would like, therefore, to work jointly on regional shows, and would be willing to at least address the matter of a joint FPX/WAS show with his board, if FPX is interested. Such a marriage would, it seems to me, lend great legitimacy and scientific credibility to the Honduran show. I discussed this with Dr. Hopper, but met with little enthusiasm, possibly because

In the debriefing, the FPX staff concluded that, at least for the immediate future, they would like to keep the show limited largely to shrimp, highly technical in nature, and with an every-other-year frequency.