

## CASE STUDIES FOR DEVELOPING A MARKETING CONCEPT FOR FISH PRODUCTS (2005)

### CASE STUDY 3

France: [http://sea-river.com/131\\_6\\_gb.php](http://sea-river.com/131_6_gb.php)

#### Quality labels in fish farming in France

In French fish farming there are a range of labels which correspond to the various required levels of monitoring and guarantees for consumers. They can be distinguished by the nature of the requirements of producers, processors and distributors.

The first label to be introduced by the profession was “*Truite Qualité charte*” (AFNOR V 45-100). This concerns 95 production sites and 21 processing units, 27 000 tonnes of trout representing 71% of the production of trout for consumption (2002).

“*Charte Qualité Aquaculture de France*” has been created for marine fish and sturgeon : 18 farms, 8 hatcheries for a production of 4 000 tonnes (66% of total volume). The label seems positive in terms of image and is subscribed to by many fish farmers but the product does not necessarily increase in value from a financial point of view.



The official quality labels involve a small number of businesses (*label rouge* bass, organic turbot). For trout the fish farming community agrees that there has been a definite improvement in quality from the health and hygiene aspect and the subsequent monitoring. The quality labels have also united producers. The disappointment arises from the price which remains low. Large and average sized sales outlets consider it a question of minimum quality on which they base their terms and conditions.

*Truite Qualité Charte* results in very limited benefits despite the considerable investment in time (traceability). Fish farms with the “*agriculture biologique*” (organic) designation means much higher investment costs (30%) and leads to very high sales prices for small quantities. For fish from artificial lakes there is a great deal to be done and it will take a long time.



The quality guarantees instigated by the distributor involves mainly fish farms with high production capacity, they take the form of contracts between the distributor's name and the producers on the basis of a joint agreement on terms and conditions. The weak point is once again the purchase price which is not necessarily increased by the quality guarantee.

The setting up of quality guarantee procedures entails extra costs if only to permit the traceability of the products. Each fish farm is attracted to the quality approach offering it the most benefits: terms and conditions with the large and average sized distribution networks, know-how for regional products, restocking quality (*Club de la Charte des salmonidés de repeuplement*), etc.

The obstacles to quality guarantees arise from: the difficulties linked to proficiency in zootechnics, incomplete or imprecise, the difficulty in deciding the accreditation criteria and methods for assessing the quality of the products. The image of farmed fish created with reference to wild fish.

The overall picture represents, without a doubt, considerable progress in the quality of products, in the unity of the fish farming community and in the protection of the market share, but except for specific cases there is hardly any increase in the commercial value of the fish. The relationship between producers and the large distribution outlets still works in favour of the latter. The profession is generally unprepared for these difficult commercial relationships.

*"Etude des démarches qualité "produit" en pisciculture" Marion Fisher (ENSA Montpellier) for Ofimer in association with the Cipa*

It has been recently demonstrated that these quality labels do have a significant impact on prices in markets where they have become established. In the case of "Label Rouge" chicken products, the following prices were obtained:

- Basic chicken products on French markets: € 2,50 – 3,00/kg
- Label Rouge chicken products on same market € 5,00 – 6,00/kg
- Organic chicken products on same market € 7,00 – 8,00/kg

**Source:** ADRIA, France, 2004