USDA Catfish Listening Session
Thursday August 2nd, 2018
Stoneville, Mississippi
Notes

Co-Hosts:

- Gene Kim, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, National Program Leader, Aquaculture
- Caird Rexroad, III, USDA Agricultural Research Service, National Program Leader, Aquaculture
- Mississippi State University

19 attendees including representatives from USDA, ARS Warmwater Aquaculture Research Unit and Mississippi State – see list

Genetics, Breeding and Broodstock:

- Looking for technology that will decrease the cost of raising fish. (Priority Rank #1)
- Genetic Improvement to make robust fish. (Priority Rank #3)
    - Disease resistance.
    - Tolerance of low dissolved oxygen.
    - De-emphasize selection for faster growing fish.
    - Scientists should work with the industry to release after beta testing through partnerships that include on-farm evaluations.
- Year-round availability of fingerlings and therefore supply for processing.
- Improve reproduction efficiency of males, reduce the number of females required to produce hybrids, including reducing female mortality. Increase the overall efficiency of producing hybrid catfish fingerlings.
- Genetic modifications are not a priority and will not help solve production issues, stakeholders prefer this approach not taken by ARS Warmwater Aquaculture Research Unit, Stoneville, Mississippi, at this time.
- It is important for USDA to do genomics research, industry cannot.
- De-emphasize diversification of species.

Fish Health:

- Reduced loss to disease. (Priority Rank #1)
    - Columnare at fingerling stage.
    - Pisicida (tarda) at foodfish stage.
    - Enteric Septicemia of Catfish (ESC) is a concern but vaccine is working.
    - Aeromonas
- Reduce fish mortalities in the winter months.
- New grading systems which reduce fish stress.

Quality:

- Improve water quality to reduce off-flavor. (Priority Rank #2)
- Improve the consistency of carcass quality traits, especially color and texture.

Production Systems:

- Improve water quality and technologies that inform regulatory policies and facilitate compliance. (Priority Rank #2)
- Technologies for controlling inventories of hybrid catfish to consistently produce fish that are ready for processing and are not oversized, such that fish are not carried over during times of increased supply but instead support processing year-round.
- New harvest technologies are a priority, but a low one.

Additional Priorities:

- New cost-effective technologies that reduce the impacts of bird depredation, including the spread of diseases.
- In filling positions, and in particular the Research Leader, stakeholders would like to see someone who communicates well, who connects to the industry and understands it.

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Name	Affiliation
Archie Tucker	USDA ARS
Austin Jones	Catfish Fingerling Producer, MS
Ben Pentecost	Catfish Producer, MS
Brad Graham	Catfish Producer AR
Charles Mischke	Mississippi State University
Chat Phillips	Catfish Producer, MS
Chris McGlawn	Catfish Producer, MS
Craig Tucker	USDA ARS
David Wise	Mississippi State University
Ellen Harris	USDA ARS
Jeff Baxter,	Catfish Fingerling Producer, AR
Joey Lowery	Catfish Producer, AR
Jon Cooper	Tackett Farms
Leigh Holland	Catfish Fingerling Producer, MS
Lester Khoo	Mississippi State University
Shorty Jones	Catfish Producer, MS
Solon Scott	America's Catch