

AFTER A DECADE, BLACK TIGER SHRIMPS STAGE A COMEBACK IN KERALA

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Economics of Animal-Rearing incl. White, Blue & Pink Revolutions

Tiger shrimps displayed for sale in Kochi, Kerala. File

Ending a decade's slide in the production of black tiger shrimps, Kerala is experiencing a comeback of the top healthy seafood, thanks to a much-needed initiative of the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) launched earlier this year.

The MPEDA's efforts to revive the production of black tiger shrimps on a mass sale of its seeds have been receiving encouraging feedback, according to authorities with the statutory body that functions under the Union Governments Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

The mass sale of seeds since the past 100 days shows a rapidly growing interest among the farmers to raise the disease-free variety, the authorities said.

The Kochi-headquartered MPEDA had on February 18 begun supplying black tiger shrimp seeds from its new multi-species aquaculture complex (MAC) at Vallarpadam.

The inaugural sale was done by MPEDA chairman K.S. Srinivas by handing over one lakh seeds to former Kerala Director-General of Police Hormis Tharakan, a progressive shrimp farmer.

Today, Mr. Srinivas noted, the black tiger prawn supplied from the nine-acre MAC has been showing 'excellent' performance in various parts of the State.

We knew that increased production of the black tiger variety can boost India's shrimp exports in the long run. We are seeing the early signs of it happening, he said.

Recently, I visited some of the aquaculture farms to understand the field performance of the seeds from our facility. Our seeds are doing well. The farmers comments are encouraging," he said.

Mr. Tharakan, buttressing the point, said the seeds showed good performance during the three months of culture period.

"They [seeds] gained an average weight of 38gm, thanks to the quality. I got 260kg of shrimp in the 90 days from an area of 50 cents by stocking 10,000 seeds. Currently, we are rearing another 90,000 seeds, he said.

This is in happy contrast to my facing a continuous crop loss for the last three years, he said.

The 7.26-crore MAC, which was inaugurated on December 8 last, features a hatchery with an annual production capacity of 20 million black tiger shrimp seeds, besides nurseries for four varieties of fin fishes.

C.V. Mathew, another farmer who has been into shrimp cultivation for 16 years in his native Kumbalangi suburb, said black tiger seeds from MAC attained 25gm size in the first 50 days.

In 86 days, the animals reached an average size of 40gm, he said.

I have never experienced such a growth rate of my crop. No different has been the feedback from the farmers from down State Kollam and Kannur in north Malabar after culturing the seeds taken from the Vallarpadam hatchery, top MPEDA officials said.

It was from 2010 that the black tiger shrimp, an endemic species to south-east Asia, began to face a slump in its traditional reputation as a major variety of cultivated shrimp item in India. That was after aquaculture farmers in the country began to focus on growing the exotic *vannamei* species of shrimps in a big way.

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New find is bigger in size than one discovered in 2016, also in Arunachal Pradesh

The Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) has lost one of its beloved members — 41-year-old Orangutan, an extant species of great apes. According to NZP,

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