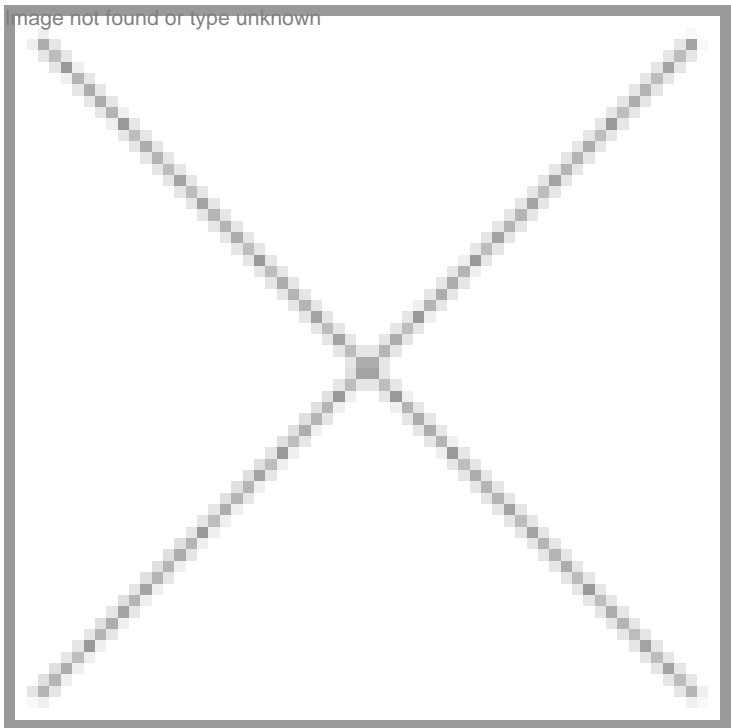


"Aquaculture production globally has been increasing on an average by 10% annually,"

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says Dr Modadugu V Gupta.

Dr Modadugu V Gupta, WorldFish scientist, who recently retired after a 15-year career with the Center, has been named winner of the \$250,000 World Food Prize for bringing the Blue Revolution to those most in need through the expansion of aquaculture and fish farming in South and Southeast Asia and Africa. The World Food Prize will be formally presented to Dr Gupta at a ceremony on October 13, 2005 in the Iowa State Capitol Building in Des Moines. Dr Gupta shares his thoughts to BioSpectrum on what this Prize means to him.

Dr Gupta hearty congratulations from BioSpectrum! What does being a World Food Prize Laureate mean to you?

I feel that this award is a recognition of the importance of the aquaculture and fisheries to the nutritional security and livelihoods of poor in developing countries. I am happy to be the first person in the fisheries sector to be selected for such a prestigious and the highest award in food and agriculture and this gives me more impetus to work for the betterment of lives of rural poor farmers.

What are the challenges of aquaculture today and how can the bar be raised?

The world is looking forward to increased production from aquaculture (both freshwater and coastal aquaculture) to meet the increasing gap between supply and demand. Aquaculture production globally has been increasing on an average by 10 percent annually. While there are excellent opportunities for further increase, what is needed is the sustainability of these

productions without degrading the environment. In the past, due to improper planning and implementation, there has been some damage to the environment, especially in the case of coastal aquaculture. All the stakeholders involved in the sector have to ensure that we undertake environmentally friendly aquaculture. Further, it might be necessary to look for species of fish and crustaceans that do not need animal protein in their feed as fishmeal that provides animal protein in the fish and livestock feeds is going to be in short supply in future.

What is your impression about India in this context and how can India leverage on the vast coastline?

India with its long coast has excellent opportunities for aquaculture. However, unplanned growth in 1990s has led to problems leading to closing down of some of the establishments. Having learnt the lesson, it is time for the industry to change their management styles. Further, while shrimp production globally is on the increase, the demand has not increased resulting in heavy competition in the market. To compete in the high-end markets such as Europe, our exporters have to follow strict quality controls.

What is your message to the Indian scientists?

India has large number of excellent scientists and well-equipped research institutions. However, in recent years, we have lost edge as compared to some of the countries in the region in the field of aquaculture. My message to Indian scientists is that they should undertake research that is relevant to the industry as otherwise the industry will lose confidence in them and investments made in research will go waste.

Ch. Srinivas Rao