

ORL-EE&P-12**Issues, Opportunities and Challenges in Pangasius Farming in Nepal**

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Pangasius (*Pangasianodon hypophthalmus*- the striped catfish) is one of the emerging species in aquaculture of Nepal. Pangasius farming was initiated in 2008/09 by some farmers on trial basis. The results obtained from initial trails encouraged farmers to produce it commercially. In the year 2013 Government noticed its presence and was entered in National fish statistics, and in 2017 it was officially included in the list of recommended species for aquaculture. The germplasm was introduced from Thailand. Government provided incentives to establish hatchery facilities and overseas breeding and nursing training was organized for private and public sector to initiate seed production in the country. Since then pangasius farming is rapidly increasing in almost all the districts of southern Nepal, covering six provinces and 23 districts. Pangasius is cultivated in monoculture as well as in polyculture with carps and covered an area of 750 ha in 2022/23.

The pangasius production reached 7000 ton with average monoculture productivity of 21.4 ton/ha/yr and polyculture adding the productivity by 1.45 ton/ha/yr. The demand for pangasius is increasing rapidly specially in the northern part of the country and major urban markets where the demand shift from carps to pangasius which is reflected in the fish import scenario as well, pangasius alone constituted 46% in total fish import for the human consumption in 2022/23. There is a challenge to meet the growing demand through increased production and reduced the import. Despite its high productivity, product diversity, consumer friendly flesh quality and high demand, pangasius industry is not expanding up to its potential due to technical, financial and policy issues.

The main technical issues include input quality and availability including seed, tools for cost effective feed formulation and efficient feeding management, lack of standards and guidelines for the adoption of Good Aquaculture Practices, poor post-harvest facilities and limited value addition, unfair trade, poor financial literacy and entrepreneurship development opportunities and poor technical capacity of both private and public sector.

To address the above stated issues and to develop a sustainable pangasius production and upgraded value chain by strengthening the technical capacity and entrepreneurship of aquaculture professionals and other key value chain actors including seed and feed suppliers, fish farmers, processors, and traders FAO is supporting the Government with a Technical Cooperation Project. Financial and policy issues also need to be addressed for the sector to get a boom.

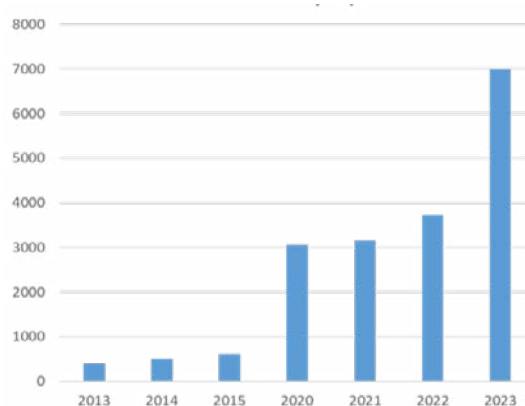


Figure1: Year wise production of pangasius in Nepal

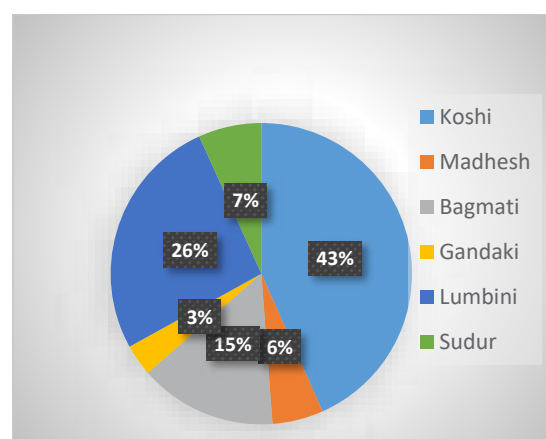


Figure 2: Province wise Pangasius production