

Organic Aquaculture Feeds: Towards proven sustainability

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Abstract

With global fish stocks unable to supply the ever-increasing demand for seafood, the rapidly expanding aquaculture sector now supplies over 40% of seafood consumed globally. In the same way that we changed from hunter-gatherer to farmer on the land, we are now farming our seas and oceans. On the conference theme of 'Cultivating the Future,' like it or not, the future of seafood is cultivation.

Accompanied by a modern media and environmental NGO network, the relatively recent and rapid development of some types of fish farming was widely publicized and criticized for its environmental impacts. The suitability of some species to farming has been questioned, and the acceptability of some types of aquaculture within the organic movement has also been repeatedly debated.

Within the organic movement, these arguments frequently ignore the huge environmental impacts of terrestrial agriculture and the historic domestication of wild animals and plants. Yet it is clear that aquaculture must be able to demonstrate the sustainability of its cultivation methods.

As with all farming systems, feed is a central component. It is also a key aspect in the debate about the sustainability of some types of aquaculture. This paper will clarify the relevant issues and the ongoing pursuit of proven sustainability for organic aquaculture feeds. In particular, it will focus on the use of marine ingredients such as fishmeal and oil to feed carnivorous fish such as salmon, trout, or cod.