

B-108 A review of precautions and their effectiveness against prevention of SEMBV in shrimp farms in Sri Lanka

A S L E Corca, J M P K Jayasinghe, R G S Wijesekara

National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency, Crow Island, Colombo 15

Shrimp farming industry in Sri Lanka was first affected by the white spot virus (SEMBV) in 1966. It was first observed in the Udappuwa area in May 1996 and by September it had spread southwards upto Thoduwawa. At the same time it was recorded in the farms at Mi-oya estuary and spread to 90% of the farms in this area. The disease resulted in ceasing the operation of shrimp farms in the North-Western province. However by late September some farmers commenced restocking with, or without precautions.

The present study investigates the precautions taken by farmers and their effectiveness in preventing the white spot disease under the present conditions and practices of shrimp farming.

In a subsequent attack of white spot in December 1996, farms in both Thoduwawa and Chilaw were affected. On this occasion only 59% of the farmers took precautions of which 42% chlorinated their incoming water. Also, 81% of the precautionary farmers took measures against birds, 40% used low water exchange rates, and 23% used stock tanks. The stocking densities were reduced by 26% farmers. It was also observed that about 80% of the farmers were careful about preventive methods only during the 1st half of the culture cycle. 7% of the farmers did not even dry their ponds for more than 3 weeks before re-stocking. This resulted in a second out-break of SEMBV which commenced from Thoduwawa and spread northwards towards Mundel.

Among the conclusions drawn from the study, it became clear that farmers need to organize into a farming association so that it would facilitate them to organize and advice each other on management practices and disease prevention and control methods. It would be more practical to develop an understanding among themselves on handling disease situations without having rules and regulations imposed by an authority (government) which are generally not complied with. This would ensure the sustainability of the industry by minimizing the risk of diseases.