



[🔊 Status of aquaculture feed and feed ingredient production and utilisation in Pakistan](#)

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Despite its small contribution to the national economy, aquaculture has become an important sector in terms of its potential for increasing domestic supply of quality protein in Pakistan. Promising prospects exist for further growth in carp production due to the high profitability relative to other types of farming and because there are about 2 million hectares of freshwater bodies (lakes, reservoirs and rivers) suitable for aquaculture. The aquaculture potential of these resources is only slightly utilised at present. Fish farming in Pakistan is operating on an extensive or limited semi-intensive level.

Farmers typically stock their ponds at a low density ranging from 800-1,000 fish/ acre with few inputs, largely fertilisation with cow dung. As a result productivity is low, ranging from 1,000-1,200 kg/acre compared to other Asian countries that are producing well in excess of 2,500 kg/acre through intensive fish culture and utilisation of artificial diets.

In order to improve production from the available resources, intensive fish culture is the need of the hour. Artificial feeding increases the carrying capacity of culture systems and can enhance fish production by many times.

In the recent past there was no concept of artificial fish feed in Pakistan. The culture of carp was dominant with a very low stocking density with low inputs in terms of feed. The normal practice of farmers was just to feed rice bran in mash form.

In Pakistan the concept of artificial manufactured feed is very new and it was introduced with all-male tilapia culture technology in the country, in which farmers are practicing intensive culture with the stocking of 3,000 fish/acre with a yield of 2,500 kg/acre with the use of artificial manufactured fish feed.

The production of tilapia reached 15,000 tonnes in the current year and it is becoming more popular day by day and encouraging the adoption of intensive farming as well as the use of artificial fish feed.

There are only two fish feed manufacturing factories operating in Pakistan on a very small scale, manufacturing feed for carps, tilapia, catfish and shrimp. A significant increase in the use artificial diets is taking place.

The major feed ingredients are very similar to those used for poultry feed e.g. fish meal, soybean meal, canola meal, sunflower meal and gluten. There is no data available for the demand and supply chain of fish feed in Pakistan as it is newly introduced business.

Fish meal is produced locally using low-value fish catch and there many factories manufacturing fish meal of export quality to other countries. No alternative source of animal protein is available.

The import of soybean meal is being conducted for utilisation in poultry and fish feed and other sources of feed ingredients of plant source are available in the country.

The cost of feed is on the higher side as the technology is newly introduced in the country with high cost of inputs such as electricity and ingredients. In future it is expected that cost effective feed will be produced locally with the multiplication of technology as an industry.

The encouraging results of all-male tilapia culture is leading towards the introduction of other high value aquaculture species such as *Litopenaeus vannamei*, *Clarius magur* and *Ictalurus punctatus*.

The aquaculture feed industry is now very new in the country and there is presently no control or regulations. As it is an emerging industry there will need to be regulations and policies to ensure production of good quality cost effective feed.

As aquaculture is increasing, so the feed industry has a vast prospect to flourish. Research is necessary to develop quality feeds with judicious price, trade and marketing, and to provide job opportunities for unemployed youth and farmers.

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