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IFFO's Johannessen: Use of marine ingredients in aquafeed “will not decline in the foreseeable future”



Nicki Holmyard published in [Aquaculture \(/news/aquaculture/\)](/news/aquaculture/),
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IFFO, the international trade body that represents the marine ingredients industry, sees a promising future for itself, even with the rise of alternative, plant- and algae-based aquafeed ingredients.

As part of a new campaign to tell its story to a wider audience, the organization recently relaunched [its website \(http://www.iffo.com\)](http://www.iffo.com) and initiated a social media campaign, according to IFFO Director General Petter Johannessen.

"There are still many old and misleading messages about marine ingredients in the public domain ... Today, one kilogram of wild fish gives 4.5 kilograms of farmed fish across global production systems," Johannessen told SeafoodSource. "We hope that by explaining the science behind what we do, we can demonstrate our readiness and willingness to have fact-based discussions with a wider audience, on marine ingredients and their importance in the food chain."

According to Johannessen, marine ingredients are set to continue their important role in global feed production of farmed fish, poultry, and pigs, with aquaculture leading the demand to maintain food security for a growing population. However, this role is little understood beyond the immediate industry, and Johannessen said he believes that greater publicity should be given to the nutritional benefits imparted by marine ingredients and their role in feeding the population.

"This point is key for us, because marine ingredients include essential proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals that are important for farmed fish, and are also passed on to humans when they eat farmed seafood. One of the central messages we highlight on our new website is, 'Quality feed means quality food.' This explains that the result of any farming reflects back on the feed, so if the feed is not up to standard, then issues can arise with flesh quality and animal health, and lower nutritional value for the consumer," Johannessen said.

Johannessen said the aquaculture industry has been built around marine ingredients, and that research and trials on new feed ingredients center around matching their nutritional properties. Future growth in aquaculture will only be possible if there is a significant increase in the volume of aquafeed produced, he added. Various studies predict that by 2030, the world should be able to produce around 75 million metric tons (MT) of aquafeed, using marine and vegetable feed ingredients.

Johannessen said IFFO has concerns about the sustainable growth of the aquaculture industry, questioning claims to replace marine ingredients – half of which are certified under responsible sourcing schemes – by other feed components, that cannot claim the same level of certification. At present, IFFO members account for 75 percent of the fishmeal and fish oil traded worldwide, and more than 55 percent of the six million MT world production – a large part of which is certified by MarinTrust, the sustainability scheme originally created by IFFO and [known as IFFO RS until earlier this year \(https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/environment-sustainability/new-identity-for-marine-ingredients-certification-program-agenda-remains-unchanged\)](https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/environment-sustainability/new-identity-for-marine-ingredients-certification-program-agenda-remains-unchanged).

"The numbers do not add up. Even the most optimistic production forecasts for novel feed ingredients – which range from 100,000 MT to 600,000 MT – would struggle to come close to the 3.5 million MT of fishmeal used every year within the aquafeed sector," Johannessen said.

As a result, Johannessen said the use of marine ingredients in aquafeed will not decline in the foreseeable future, and that feed manufacturers already regard them less as a commodity and more as a strategic ingredient in feed made from a wider variety of feed components.

"Feed companies are becoming more sophisticated in using the nutritional and physical properties of materials, but the growth in marine ingredients derived from byproducts still needs more focus," he said. "At present, more than one-third comes from the byproducts of wild or farmed fish processing, but there is potential for greater innovation in the supply chain so that we can use all the raw material produced by the fishing sector."

Johannessen said IFFO is fully committed to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and his goal is to strengthen the organization's contribution to SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 12 (responsible production and consumption), SDG 14 (life below water) and SDG 17 (partnerships).

"We are ensuring that all our new technical projects have a link to and impact on the SDGs. We are also setting up a dialogue group, which will bring stakeholders together to discuss issues around marine ingredients, particularly sustainability, and this is another exciting project for 2020," he said.

However, growing global production from aquaculture, as envisioned by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization in its recent "[State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020 \(http://www.fao.org/state-of-fisheries-aquaculture\)](http://www.fao.org/state-of-fisheries-aquaculture)," report, will require additional feed and a greater demand for marine ingredients, Johannessen said. Details of what that demand will look like and other statistical reports designed to aid the industry in growing in line with the aquaculture sector are also available to IFFO members through its new website, according to Johannessen.



In the short term, however, the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors have put a dent in annual production figures, according to [an IFFO analysis of marine ingredient market trades studying the January-July 2020 period \(https://www.iffo.com/january-july-2020-iffos-analysis-marine-ingredient-market-trends-0\)](https://www.iffo.com/january-july-2020-iffos-analysis-marine-ingredient-market-trends-0). Salmon exports suffered from increased air freight costs and cancellation of flights, and this in turn impacted on farms, many of whom were left coping with unsold produce and an increase in the number of live fish in stock. The knock-on effect of this has been higher costs for feeding and a greater risk of fish mortalities.

Total cumulative fishmeal production through July was estimated to be down by just 2 percent. The largest annual losses were reported by India and the Iceland/North Atlantic area. China is the most-important market for marine ingredients, and recently switched from its export-led model to a domestic demand-driven model as a result of the pandemic.

Nevertheless, the latest report shows that in July 2020, marine ingredient output was well over the 2011- 2019 average for the same month, up by 40 percent. Higher than-average landings in Peru were said to be the main driver, with African countries showing a historically higher availability of raw material in July.

Photo courtesy of IFFO

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 About the Author

’/autho’

Nicki Holmyard

(/author/nicki-holmyard).

Contributing Editor

 **(MAIL TO: NICKI HOLMYARD@GMAIL.COM)** nickiholmyard@gmail.com (mailto:nickiholmyard@gmail.com)



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