2024

Apr

AQUACULTURE IN CAQUETÁ: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Karina Monroy | Research Assistant

Authors: Karina Monroy and Tathiana Bezerra

In the department of Caquetá in Colombia, a group of 700 fish farmers are implementing new production practices focused on forest conservation to mitigate climate change. The work is supported by the Caquetá Sustentable platform, including aquaculture.

Image available online: view image

Photo by Karina Fernanda Monroy

The cultivation of ornamental fish and fish for human consumption is a common diversification strategy for farmers in Caquetá to supplement their income. Covering close to 250 hectares of water surface area, these producers are becoming an example of low-emission production methods that protect water sources, conserve sensitive habitats and forests, and minimize the use of agrochemicals.

The program is part of the Caquetá Low Emission Rural Development LED-R Strategy that is supported by Amazonia Connect, a partnership between USAID, Solidaridad Network, Earth Innovation Institute, National Wildlife Federation, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The work is promoted in the territory by the Department's Secretariat of Environment and Agriculture.

Image available online: view image

Photo by ACUICA

Ongoing progress can be followed on Caquetá Sustentable, a public access platform that highlights examples of legal, productive businesses that are in harmony with nature. This is especially important in a department that lost roughly 19,193 hectares of forest in 2022 according to data from the Ministry of Environment and Rural Development.

"What we want is that people who are interested in the conservation of the Amazon can enter and see that we are something different from what is expected," explains Jorge Eduardo Franco Páez, technical and project director of the Association of Aquaculturists of Caquetá.

Image available online: view image

Photo by ACUICA

The group was organized in 1995, after several ranchers decided to cultivate fish to diversify their income. This trade organization is a clear example of how Low Carbon Agriculture (LCA) can be implemented and foster a culture of conservation. Since then they have seen an increase in the number of plant and wildlife species around the fish lakes.

The Caquetá Sustentable platform makes the efforts of fish farmers more visible and helps them strengthen their commercial alliances.

Image available online: view image

Photo by ACUICA

"The platform is linked to a Google Earth location and there you can see where the producers are in each municipality and there is a description of the

fish we produce in captivity," says Franco Paez.

Similar to the fish farming ranchers, two other associations committed to the sustainable development of the department use this platform to demonstrate their commitment to conservation and carry out their agricultural and livestock activities with less impact on the environment.

_____

Amazonia Connect is a partnership between USAID, Solidaridad, Earth Innovation Institute, National Wildlife Federation, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Together with USAID's Amazon Regional Environment Program, producers, companies, local governments and financial institutions, Amazonia Connect promotes and scales the adoption of low-emission commodity production to improve biodiversity conservation and climate resilience in Brazil, Colombia, and Peru.

This article was made possible thanks to the generous support of the people of the United States of America through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this article are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the U.S. Agency for International Development or the U.S. Government.