



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Advances in Hatchery Technology Boost Fish Yields in Cambodia



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Thai Meng improved his hatchery business with assistance from Feed the Future.

In 2009, after several unsuccessful attempts at raising fish, Thai Meng gave up. The aquaculture farmer's pond just wasn't making any money.

"I had trouble getting good fingerlings," he says. Fingerlings, or young fish, are to aquaculture what seeds are to rice farming. Without good fingerlings, successful harvests are impossible.

A shortage of high-quality fingerlings is a major issue throughout Cambodia's aquaculture sector, which is why Feed the Future is introducing simple and cost-effective technologies that are helping hatcheries dramatically improve their operations. To date, the program's 12 client fish hatcheries have increased their fingerling productivity by 431 percent over baseline, from fewer than 200,000 fingerlings to almost a million. The hatcheries have also increased the average weight of their fingerlings by 192 percent and reduced mortality by 34 percent.

These successes are due in large part to a range of technologies introduced by aquaculture specialists. For example, Secchi disks, which cost just six dollars apiece, help hatchery technicians monitor and manage water clarity and nutrients in ponds, resulting in better fingerlings. Species-specific nutrition programs and proper stocking densities help facilitate rapid growth. And locally available water-quality test strips are simple to use and a cheap alternative to costly imported kits. Used together, these technologies help farmers monitor and manage water quality and nutrient content, as well as detect and respond to diseases early in order to maximize fingerling survival.

Feed the Future's support for Cambodia's aquaculture sector goes beyond hatcheries. The program is introducing cost-effective technologies to more than two thousand aquaculture farmers throughout this vital value chain, including pelleted feed, growth monitoring, burnt lime to adjust pond pH, and selecting fish species based on seasonal conditions. To date, these and other technologies have increased farmer yields by 268 percent, resulting in income gains of 131 percent.

Five years after giving up on his aquaculture pond, Thai decided to get involved in the hatchery business himself. With assistance from Feed the Future, he began raising catfish, tilapia and pangasius fingerlings, which he sells on the local market. After just two growing cycles, Thai's business is thriving. He has increased his annual income by a staggering 1,577 percent, from \$125 to \$2,096. In addition, he is supplying local fish farmers with fingerlings, strengthening food security in his community.

“Without this technology, I wouldn’t be running a hatchery,” Thai says. “It’s helped make my business a success.”