

Self-confidence, hard work and proper farming technology are keys to success



Monitoring growth of Shrimp

Rampal Upazila in the Bagerhat district is known as one of the major shrimp-producing upazilas in Bangladesh. One of the villages with the most potential in this upazila is Khejurmohol.

Because it is located in a semi-saline zone, the area is well-suited for shrimp production.

Mr. Shahidul Islam is a sincere and experienced shrimp farmer in this village who has been involved in shrimp, prawn and carp mixed farming for more than 15 years, the ponds providing his main source of income. But over the past seven to ten years, he has not achieved his desired level of production from his gher, due to outbreaks of disease that reduced or wiped out his crop. He used to buy shrimp postlarvae from a local hatchery, but 30-45 days after stocking, most of them died. On average, his annual harvest was less than 1 kg of shrimp per decimal during these years. Mr. Islam said, *"We cultivate using extensive methods, and as a result we face losses every year. I was ready to give up shrimp culture because there is never any successful production."*

SAFETI arranged a farmer group discussion in this area in November 2018. Shahidul Islam participated in the discussion along with other local farmers and after hearing about SAFETI's goals, objectives and the semi-intensive farming methods, he joined the local project group of 25 interested farmers. He was selected as the demonstration farmer for this group, because of his enthusiasm and willingness to invest in the

adoption of the SAFETI-promoted technologies.

The SAFETI team arranged training for the group on the “Six Key Steps for Successful Shrimp and Prawn Farming”. After attending all three training modules, Mr. Islam re-excavated his 33 decimal gher (0.13 ha) to 7-feet deep and installed proper bio-security measures, including a net fence and foot baths. In July 2019, he stocked 4,000 HH shrimp post larvae and carefully followed all the six key steps, which included monitoring water quality and shrimp health regularly and using good quality feed and probiotics. In September 2019, to prepare for the second phase of the rotational culture system, he began rearing 4,000 freshwater prawn post larvae in a separate 21 decimal area, in accordance with the business plan that SAFETI staff helped him to prepare.

Three months after stocking the shrimp post larvae in October 2019, Mr. Islam harvested 109 kg of shrimp with an average weight of 38 g. and sold them for BDT 75,000. He had invested a total of BDT 32,000 in the whole shrimp (bagda) production process, so he earned a handsome net profit.

When salinity of the gher water started declining, after harvesting the shrimp, and after following the SAFETI-recommended water treatment procedures, he transferred 3,000 juvenile freshwater prawns from his nursery into the main gher. He also added some carp in the gher. All were growing very well until Cyclone Bulbul struck, when he began to see some problems. His prawns became weak due to some unidentified cause and he was able only to harvest 85 kg in February 2020, instead of the 150 kg he had been anticipating. Nevertheless, with the 100 kg of carp that he also harvested, he had net sales of BDT 42,500 from the prawns and BDT 13,000 from the fish. As his total

expenditure during the second crop for the PL, feed and other purposes had been only BDT 11,000, he made a good profit.

Mr. Shahidul said, “This is the best year in my life, because I have found the magic to produce shrimp, thanks to the SAFETI team. Next year I will try to buy two aerators to boost my production.”

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