

Major Sturgeon Farm for Turkmenistan



Signing the deal for the Turkmenistan sturgeon farm are: back row, L-R, Levent Akdogan, FPT Ltd; Dietmar Firzlaff, aquaFuture; Omer Belgutay, A'Grup; front, L-R, Christian Sorensen, Billund Aquakultur Service; Subhan Atayev, A'Grup

A deal has been signed to build a high-tech recirculation aquaculture system (RAS) for sturgeon in the Central Asian Republic of Turkmenistan.

Around 100 ha of land directly along the Caspian Sea is being prepared for the plant which will use a combination of salt water from the sea and freshwater.

Already €20 million has been invested for the first phase of this operation. Caviar and meat production will be used to satisfy the local market as well as being available for export.

Engineering, building, training, operation and processing are being organised around five project members. They are:

- A'Grup of Turkmenistan/Turkey which will be responsible for the implementation, construction work and the running of the farm;

- Billund Aquakultur Service A/S of Denmark who will design, engineer and provide a 'turn-key' farm;
- Aquatir of Moldova who will provide staff training and know-how transfer;
- FPT Ltd of Turkey which will organise the processing aspect; and
- aquaFUTURE e.K., of Germany, which will oversee the project.

Much of the farm will be set-up and organised along the lines of Europe's largest and most modern RAS sturgeon farm in Moldova. Billund Aquakultur, Aquatir, FPT Ltd. and aquaFUTURE e.K. were all involved with that project.

Training of the future staff will take place at the Moldova plant and the project will be guided for some time by experts from Aquatir.

According to Dietmar Firzlaff of aquaFUTURE, the plant should be operational in 2015.

"The team is already thinking about the next step which will be to produce large numbers of sturgeon fingerlings to be released into the Caspian Sea," says Firzlaff, who is also a member of the World Sturgeon Conservation Society. "In preparing and releasing the fingerlings for the restocking we will follow all scientific guidelines."