



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UOG, CoreSeed boost local food security by farming shrimp, prawns, and saltwater tilapia

Locally and sustainably raised shrimp and tilapia from the Guam Aquaculture Training and Development Center under the University of Guam are now regularly available for Guam residents and restaurants to purchase, contributing to food security on island as well as the local economy.

Under Managing Director Donghuo Jiang, an experienced aquaculturist with a doctorate in fisheries science from Texas A&M University, CoreSeed Aquaculture (Guam) Corp. is raising Pacific white marine shrimp, black tilapia, and salt-tolerant red tilapia at the UOG facility. The products are available on a wholesale basis through CoreSeed, while retail consumers can purchase jumbo-sized Pacific white shrimp and red tilapia at the Guam Fishermen's Co-operative Association. Jiang is also raising giant freshwater prawns that are not yet for sale.

"We've been delivering jumbo shrimp to the Co-op every two or three days," Jiang said. "Freshness is very important," he added. "We deliver within a few hours of harvesting."

With retail and wholesale orders combined, CoreSeed has been selling about 400 to 500 pounds of shrimp per month and is steadily ramping up production toward producing more than 1,000 pounds per month by the end of the year.

Specific pathogen-free shrimp

UOG researchers previously developed the "specific pathogen-free," or SPF, shrimp being raised at the hatchery, which means no antibiotics or chemicals are needed or used as the shrimp are disease-free, unlike imported frozen shrimp. The demand for SPF shrimp throughout Southeast Asia is high, Jiang said, as shrimp in those

countries routinely test positive for certain pathogens and banned chemical substances.

Jiang said CoreSeed's shrimp have a natural sweetness.

"Customers love it," said Manny Duenas, president of the Guam Fishermen's Co-op. "We started with 20 pounds a week and have moved up to [selling] 80 pounds a week since January."

Saltwater tilapia

The red tilapia is a newer product available at the Co-op since the beginning of July. The fish has been selectively bred at the UOG facility to be tolerant of saltwater, giving it a flavor that Duenas said has been popular among Co-op customers.

"Since it's raised in saltwater, the flavor is extremely different from regular tilapia — it's like reef fish. And the texture is very soft, like a deep bottom fish," he said.

Jiang said he is working toward producing 1,000 pounds of tilapia per month as well.

Food security for the island

CoreSeed's aquaculture operation, made possible through a public-private partnership with UOG through the Research Corporation of the University of Guam, will continue to grow its production and be a consistent and reliable food source for Guam residents.

"Especially for Guam as an island, food security is an issue, and especially now during the pandemic, we need to produce food here," Jiang said.

It will also bring an authenticity to Guam's tourism industry when it rebounds by providing the local seafood that tourists expect, he said.

Those interested in wholesale orders of Pacific white shrimp or black or red tilapia can reach CoreSeed Aquaculture (Guam) Corp. at (671) 483-1616. Retail customers can purchase jumbo Pacific white shrimp and red tilapia from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily at Guam Fishermen's Co-op next to Chamorro Village in Hagåtña.

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Photo captions:



2020-fadian-hatchery

A walkway at the UOG Guam Aquaculture Training and Development Center separates tanks of black tilapia and saltwater-tolerant red tilapia being researched for growth rate. Both types of tilapia are available for wholesale purchase through CoreSeed Aquaculture (Guam) Corp.



2020-red-tilapia

A tank at the UOG Guam Aquaculture Training and Development Center holds red tilapia broodstock, mature fish used for breeding.



2020-donghuo-jiang

Donghuo Jiang, managing director of CoreSeed Aquaculture (Guam) Corp., stands by a tank of post-larval shrimp, which will be raised and eventually sold to local restaurants and retailers or sold to other local aquaculture farmers to raise.



2020-jumbo-shrimp

A jumbo Pacific white shrimp at the UOG Guam Aquaculture Training and Development Center. The shrimp are being bred and raised by CoreSeed Aquaculture (Guam) Corp. to be sold to aquaculture farms and consumers.



2020-fishermens-coop

Raymond Mafnas holds a locally raised jumbo Pacific white shrimp, now available for retail purchase at the Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association next to Chamorro Village in Hagåtña.

Photos courtesy of the University of Guam