

Developing Aquashops in Kenya

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Abstract

Commercial aquaculture is gaining momentum in Kenya with farmers looking at it as viable enterprises especially in rural areas. Market for farmed fish in Kenya is quite promising with fish prices in several parts of the country ranging from KES 150 (USD 1.8) per kg. This indicates a real investment opportunity through aquaculture. Almost all major urban centers in Kenya where aquaculture is practiced in the surrounding areas constitute assured markets especially for Tilapia. However one of the major bottlenecks to commercial farming in the country is lack of aquashops where farmers can buy aquaculture inputs with ease and timely access. Farmers have to travel long distances to procure aquaculture inputs especially fish feeds, harvesting nets, predator control nets, pond fertilizers, fingerling transportation bags, pond liners among others. There is need to establish aquashops where farmers can buy a variety of aquaculture inputs under one roof within their area. A feasibility survey conducted in Western Kenya outlined a number of factors that need to be considered while establishing aquashop in any locality. These factors include farmers and ponds distribution, access road network, existence of related businesses such as agro-shops, vet-shops, animal feeds shops and agricultural materials dealers outlets. The key factor however was number of fish farmers within an area as this foretold the number of potential customers for an aquashop hence the viability of the aquashop within an area.