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RESEARCH REPORTS

SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE FOR A SECURE FUTURE

Title: Evaluation of integrated tilapia culture by resource limited farmers in Panama and Guatemala

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to evaluate the current status of tilapia pond projects initiated in the 1980s by the governments of Panama and Guatemala, with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and technical support provided by Auburn University. Projects in both countries were designed to improve the nutrition and increase the income of poor farmers by teaching them the skills required to become self-sufficient pond managers. During June and July 1998 the authors visited 21 cooperatively managed fish pond projects in Panama, and 37 family and 2 cooperatively managed fish ponds in Guatemala. The evaluation team found that in Panama, 6 of the cooperative projects were abandoned and the remaining 15 were being used to grow rice and/or fish, while in Guatemala, 39% of the ponds were abandoned, 48% were under-utilized, and 13% were well managed. Fish ponds did not have the intended impact on household nutrition and income for a combination of technical, economic, social, and political reasons. However, participants found ways to profit from the existence of ponds as 15 of 21 cooperatively managed pond projects in Panama and 28 of 46 individual household pond projects in Guatemala were still used at some level of proficiency.

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