

5th Vietnamese–Hungarian International Conference on Animal Production and Aquaculture for Sustainable Farming, including Hungarian–Vietnamese MGE-NEFE (ODA) Project Major Conference; Can Tho University, Can Tho, Vietnam (11-15 August, 2007)

Conference summary

Background

The 5th Vietnamese–Hungarian Conference on Animal Production and Aquaculture for Sustainable Farming, including Hungarian–Vietnamese MGE-NEFE (ODA) Project Major Conference, held in Vietnam at Can Tho University (11-16 August, 2007) was part of a series of conferences, started in 1998 and held in every second year either in Vietnam or in Hungary, initiated by KATKI Godollo (Godollo Division of ATK, Herceghalom, since 2006) and HAKI, Szarvas. From Vietnamese side, Thu Duc University, NIAH, Hanoi, and Can Tho University are the main participants. There were more than 50 participants from Vietnam and Hungary and also a JICA expert from Japan, taking part officially in the 5th Vietnamese-Hungarian Conference.

Joining to the traditional sections (animal breeding and research, aquaculture) of previous Vietnamese-Hungarian Conferences, the 5th Conference of the MGE-NEFE (ODA) project, which called “Adaptation of Hungarian poultry breeds in Vietnam, to reinforce development of poor regions, agrarian environment protection and gene conservation” was also included into the scientific and field programme.

Concluding remarks and proposals of the 5th Vietnamese-Hungarian Conference underline the following main areas for co-operation:

- Further improvements of collaboration in the fields of animal production and aquaculture with Vietnam, Laos and other South-East Asian countries.
- Answers to the new challenges in agriculture.
- Possibilities to improve agricultural production in the less developed regions.
- Development of organic agriculture and aquaculture in South-East Asia.
- The need to exchange of views and knowledge.
- Safety aspects of food production and export.

Main topics of the Conference:

- Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) in Vietnam and South-East Asia.
- Quality of animal and fish products, aspects of genetics, reproduction, nutrition, animal health care and environmental factors in ecological and sustainable farming systems, adaptation possibilities of foreign domestic animal breeds in the tropics.
- The role of animal and fish genetic resources (AnGR) in sustainable agriculture.
- Production systems, enhancing sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Domestic animal species, concerned in the Conference programme:

- Species for aquaculture, different fish species
- Small domestic animal species (poultry: chicken, turkey, guinea fowl, goose, duck; rabbit, pig)
- Ruminants: (cattle, sheep, goat)

Farming systems concerned in the Conference programme:

- Traditional farming
- Ecological type mixed farming
- Free range farming, grazing
- Organic farming

Sessions of the Conference:

Session 1 Plenary session incl. MGE-NEFE project (for invited speakers): Presentations of the session discussed the importance of bilateral or multilateral co-operations in agricultural research for development, feed safety regulations and organic farming in the EU with regards to trends and future prospects of animal production, aquaculture and related research in Asia and Europe.

Session 2 Animal husbandry: Vietnamese-Hungarian Co-operation, MGE-NEFE project: Guiding principles as sustainability, gene conservation and introduction of exotic breeds into Vietnam, as well as main results of adaptation studies of Hungarian turkey breeds in Vietnam, obtained so far in the MGE-NEFE project, as well as elaboration of the software for computing breeding data were presented.

Session 3 Animal husbandry and research, incl. MGE-NEFE project: Presentations dealt with different aspects of high quality and safe meat production in pig and poultry, Hungarian-Vietnamese co-operation in Guinea-fowl breeding. Scientific reviews and original works in molecular genetics, avian reproduction, nutrition, and feeding and breeding technologies were also presented.

Session 4 Aquaculture and fisheries: World trends and Hungarian and Vietnamese specialities of organic Aquaculture, breeding of commercially important aquaculture species with special regards to indigenous species, and the different aspects of development of water efficient and environment friendly aquaculture systems were discussed.

Concluding remarks and proposals of the 5th Vietnamese-Hungarian Conference (Miklos Mezes and Istvan Szalay)

The 5th Vietnamese-Hungarian International Conference on Animal Production and Aquaculture for Sustainable Farming was one of the events of a series of common scientific meetings between Vietnamese and Hungarian animal and recently also environmental scientists. It has been and is an excellent forum to present and discuss details on co-operation of Hungary, Vietnam and other South-east Asian countries and find the proper way to elaborate common projects for the future. Main conclusions and proposals accepted by the 5th Conference are listed below:

Further improvements of collaboration in the fields of animal production and aquaculture with Vietnam, Laos and other South-East Asian countries

The program of the conference showed that there were many improvements in the common work among the different institutions here in Vietnam and in Hungary partly within the MGE-NEFE project on poultry breeding and gene conservation, in the field of sustainable animal production, including environmental protection and gene conservation, and aquaculture. It means that scientists in both countries understand the importance of the sustainability in agricultural production beside the importance of the improvement of production traits of animals and also quality of their products.

Answers to the new challenges in agriculture

There are new trends in the progress of agricultural production worldwide, but some of them may have undesirable and maybe not reversible causes in the whole ecosystem. To find ways which will result in real improvement both quantitatively and qualitatively without those harmful effects is a requirement both in industrialised and developing countries.

Possibilities to improve agricultural production in the less developed regions

Results of research and development projects which were presented during the sessions of the 5th conference showed that there are real possibilities to improve the amount and quality of agricultural products of the less developed regions here in Vietnam and other South-East Asian Countries, and those results will be useful for the Hungarian agriculture and aquaculture, as well.

Possibilities to develop organic agriculture and aquaculture in South-East Asia

Establishment and development of organic farming and their qualification systems within the sustainable agricultural production would be one of the main opportunities for Vietnam, considering, that part of the existing plant- and animal production and aquaculture production systems are close to meet the main criteria of organic farming. Maintaining and strengthening those farms, together with an

accurate qualification and certification system have an additional economic possibility for selling qualified and certified organic plant, animal and fish products on the world market.

Exchange of views and knowledge

The main goal of the common work between the Vietnamese and Hungarian scientist is the exchange of views and knowledge about present situation and future trends of sustainable agriculture. However, it is also important to inform the Vietnamese colleagues about the present requirements and new regulations of the European Union as possible market for Vietnamese agricultural products, in respect of the safety aspects of the whole food chain.

Future trends in sustainable animal production, including gene conservation, organic agriculture, aquaculture and environmental protection requires more and more scientifically relevant information in those fields and transferring them to the practice, as effectively as possible. The primary importance of the extension service is well known but it requires more well-trained specialists in that field. The transfer of knowledge through research and higher education institutions seems to be the most effective way, and the organisers and participants of this conference are ready to start and continue that process.

Safety aspects of food production and export

Nowadays there are more and more requirements of the consumers even in the developing countries, for safe and healthy foods, including organic products. For that reason supply of the consumers with safe and high quality food is an important aspect of agriculture. Safety aspects of the whole food chain "from farm to fork" became more and more critical point of the world market and general problem particularly for the developing countries because of the more and more strict criteria given by the European Union. To solve that problem, any country intending to export their agricultural products into the European Union have to try to improve their quality assurance systems and at first have to look for technologies which will help to reduce the unnecessary contaminations of their products.

Brief summary of the aquaculture component of the 5th Vietnamese-Hungarian Conference (Laszlo Varadi)

Aquaculture is an important food production sector in Vietnam both for export and local supply and aquaculture also contributes to the improvement of rural livelihood. There has been traditional collaboration between Vietnamese and Hungarian aquaculture research institutions since the sixties, in which the Research Institute for Fisheries, Aquaculture and Irrigation (HAKI) plays a leading role from the Hungarian side. The 5th Vietnamese-Hungarian conference on Animal Production and Aquaculture was an excellent opportunity to report recent results of ongoing collaborations and identify future areas of joint R&D works. With support of the Hungarian International Development Cooperation (NEFE) program and the Vietnamese-Hungarian Science and Technology collaboration (TÉT), various projects have been and are carried out, which aim at the improvement of sustainability of the Vietnamese freshwater aquaculture. The development of fish seed and fish seed supply is a major project within the Hungarian NEFE framework. As a main component of this project a modern fish feed factory has been built in the Caibe Centre of the Research Institute for Aquaculture No.2. (RIA-2). HAKI, together with a Hungarian NGO, the Aquapark Association collaborating with Can Tho University, organised training program for extension workers and farmers in Can Tho Region and Hau Giang Province on sustainable aquaculture in the frame of another NEFE project. HAKI with its Vietnamese partners (Research Institute for Aquaculture No. 1 and No.2) are preparing TÉT projects on common carp breeding and on the use of natural immunostimulants in aquaculture systems. Besides the R&D areas mentioned above, further possibilities for collaboration have been identified during the conference such as: development of Best Management Practice (BMP) for specific species and aquaculture systems; breeding of commercially important aquaculture species with special regards to indigenous species; and the development of water efficient and environment friendly aquaculture system. It was decided that besides the Hungarian NEFE and TÉT schemes the Hungarian and Vietnamese partners will make efforts to explore new frameworks and funding schemes for the implementation of future projects.