

Message from the Editors

The maintenance of good health in the animals we farm is not only ethically desirable but also makes sound economic sense. Healthy aquaculture animals mean better food conversion ratios, reduced risk of unexpected losses, lower insurance premiums (for those who can afford them) and more profit for the farmer. The vibrant aquaculture industries in Asia have developed alongside a greatly increased capability for disease diagnosis and control. Some of the most devastating diseases in aquaculture have risen to prominence in Asia in last decade, such as Viral encephalopathy and retinopathy (VER) in grouper, Koi herpes virus (KHV) in carp, Yellowhead disease (YHD) and White spot disease (WSD) in prawns and protozoan diseases of oysters and clams. Key research on these and other important diseases has been conducted by researchers in the Asian region, and international capacity to control diseases has grown with regional advances in the understanding and the application of skills in epidemiology and risk analysis.

This volume includes papers on these and other themes that were originally presented at the 5th Symposium on Diseases in Asian Aquaculture on the Gold Coast, Australia, 24-28 November, 2002. We received 65 manuscripts, all of which were sent out for review to international authorities. Seven were rejected, 5 required revision and were withdrawn by the authors, and the remaining 53 papers form the body of this publication.

It has been an honour to edit these proceedings. They are a part of the ongoing journey of discovery and understanding diseases that result in the major advances in aquatic animal health which we are seeing in our region. As such, and because much of the work they contain is of outstanding quality, the manuscripts deserve a wide audience. We debated long and hard about whether the DAA V proceedings should form an entity within an international aquaculture journal available to all researchers. If they formed part of such a journal, prospective authors would not only have access to an established body of reviewers and a streamlined publication time but the published manuscripts would immediately become part of mainstream science, abstracted by the abstracting services. On the other hand, publication as a special issue of an international journal could mean loss of the established identity of the Diseases in Asian Aquaculture series. Also, without this series, the efforts and findings of Asian researchers might appear diluted in the ocean of western work. So, reluctantly, we have retained the original format despite the difficulty and timeframe required for review and editing outside of an established professional publication process.

We thank the large panel of international experts who assisted as reviewers for making their time so freely available. We also thank the authors for their patience and our parent society, the Asian Fisheries Society, for continuing to support the activities of the Fish Health Section. Finally, we acknowledge the former Chairperson of the Fish Health Section, Dr Supranee Chinabut and her Executive Committee (1999-2002) for organizing the 5th Symposium on Diseases in Asian Aquaculture so ably steering the Section to prominence on the international scene.

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