Advantages of Mechanical Feeding

• The ability to feed 100 hectares of ponds with only three employees traditional feeding from boats requires one person for every four hectares.
• The cost of the mechanical feeder is actually a little less than the cost of the two boats and two outboard motors it would take to service 100 hectares.
• Feeding times and the logistics of feeding can be optimized with a mechanical feeder.
• A pick-up truck can tow the feeder and carry the feed.
• Fuel costs are 50% lower than they are for hand feeding.

Disadvantages of Mechanical Feeding

• Farm roads must be in good condition.
• The dimensions of the pond may affect feeding efficiency. For example, a mechanical feeder throws feed about 30 meters, and it lands in a band about 5 meters wide, so the center of a large square pond would not receive much feed.
• Wind may restrict feeding to only one side of the pond.
• Feed may randomly concentrate in certain areas, causing areas of high organic loading and water quality problems.
• During wet periods, roads often become too slippery for trucks and mechanical feeders, so the farmer is obligated to feed from canoes.

The Advantages of Hand Feeding

• Feed can be distributed evenly and efficiently in any size pond regardless of location.
• Competition for feed among shrimp is reduced because the shrimp remain more distributed throughout the pond (as verified by feeding trays).
• Wind and rain do not interfere with hand feeding as much as they do with mechanical feeding.

Disadvantages of Hand Feeding

• Efficient supervision is required.
• Labor costs are 12% higher and fuel costs are 50% higher than they are for mechanical feeding.
• Biosecurity is more of problem as equipment and personnel move from one pond to the next.