

Feeding Trays:

Most shrimp farmers broadcast feeds from the pond bank or from small boats. Then they lower feeding trays—small (about 1/2 square meter), circular or rectangular, mesh-bottomed baskets containing feed—into the pond to monitor consumption. In 1992, shrimp farmers in Peru began using feeding trays to feed the entire pond. They distributed the trays around the pond so that each one "feeds" an area of approximately 500 to 1,000 square meters. Labor cost are high with this technique. At least two employees are required for every 10 hectares of ponds. But, because feed conversion ratios are so much lower when feeding trays are used, labor, construction and equipment costs are easily covered by reduced feed costs. In addition, feeding trays offer the following advantages:

- Less pollution and cleaner pond bottoms
- Reduced stress, fewer disease problems and faster growth
- An invaluable source of data on what is going on in the pond
- Early detection of disease
- Controlled administration of medicated feeds
- Reduced pumping and aeration costs
- Less pond maintenance between harvests
- Better harvest estimates

Hand Feeding Versus Mechanical Feeding: The November/December 1999 issue of *Panorama Acuicola* contains a great article by René Higuera, technical director of the Asociación en Participación Atanasia (a shrimp farm in Mexico), on the advantages and disadvantages of hand and mechanical feeding. Most hand feeding is done from small, in-pond boats, while mechanical feeding is done from pickup trucks that cruise the banks.