

Organic prawns from Bangladesh

King prawns are a delicacy world-wide, but some breeding processes are responsible for extensive environmental damage, especially in mangrove forests. The widespread use of antibiotics also has a negative impact on human health. The cultivation of "organic prawns" could be a real alternative. The BioHatch project funded by Germany's Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology aims to support the technical development, planning and construction of a pilot plant for the efficient and ecological breeding of king prawns in Bangladesh. The focus of BioHatch lies in the complex breeding of the larvae. The problem here is that the larvae are not reared in brackish water like their older siblings, but

instead require pure seawater during their initial phase of life. The two types of water, however, are usually far apart. Three sub-projects have been launched to develop individual components for a larvae hatchery: a customised salt water supply on the basis of electro dialysis and photovoltaics, water treatment via biofiltration and sustainable induction of spawning and egg maturation with light and temperature protocols. After the integration of these three components in Kalinganj, Bangladesh, the aim is for the new technology to be refined and marketed.

More information:

www.ttz-bremerhaven.de

Livestock surge may harm human health

Livestock intensification in developing countries, especially in Africa and Asia, may increase the incidence of epidemics that kill both humans and animals, the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) warns. Livestock numbers are rising sharply due to population growth and the rise in affluence, as both factors lead to increased demand for milk, meat and eggs. The increase in density leads to increased contact between humans

and animals – and hence to transmission of pathogens. Rapid urbanisation may worsen the situation, if diseases move with humans, from rural areas to cities. Agricultural intensification in the developing world is typically focused on increasing food production and profitability, while the potential effects on human health remain largely ignored, says John McDermott, deputy director general for research at ILRI.

African knowledge portal launched

In January 2011 the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) launched an online knowledge resource offering researchers and opinion leaders easy access to research and information on Africa. The Africa Portal will establish a forum to share important insights on Africa with policymakers and the general public, explained SAIIA. The project is a collaborative initiative between SAIIA, the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) in Canada and the Makerere University in Uganda. The website aims

to fill the gap in access to research findings and information on policy-related issues on the continent. A key feature of the portal is an online library collection which currently holds over 2,500 books, journals and digital documents relating to African policy issues. The entire library is downloadable free of charge. A directory of experts rounds off the online resource.

More information:

www.africaportal.org/

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