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Tilapia producer: Stunning technology a major fish welfare advancement

21 July 2022

By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Regal Springs partners with Ace Aquatec

One of the world's largest farmed tilapia producers, Regal Springs, is collaborating with technology specialists Ace Aquatec to introduce in-water controlled stunning at its main processing facilities to improve fish welfare.

The Switzerland-based company said its humane treatment initiative, which began two years ago and involved successful trials in Mexico, is in response to growing consumer demand for ethical sourcing strategies in food supply chains.

"This is a huge step forward from thermal stunning to a more humane and controlled stunning process, and with this towards better fish welfare," said Emily McGregor, Regal Springs' sustainability manager. "As a side effect process and quality parameters improved: reduced bruising, better quality of the fillets, better working conditions for staff. This supported Regal Springs' decision to move from pilot trials to immediate uptake of the equipment and proliferation across their business."

Scotland-based Ace Aquatec received £1 million in funding from the Humane Slaughter Association to provide pilot stunning equipment to fish farms that had no humane harvesting in place. Ace Aquatec and Regal Springs collaborated with the Nautilus Collaboration and The Center for Responsible



One of the world's largest farmed tilapia producers will introduce in-water controlled stunning at its processing facilities to improve fish welfare. Photo by Darryl Jory.

Seafood. Ace Aquatec's Humane Stunner Universal System allowed for these major advancements, the companies stated in a joint release.

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“Regal Springs presented us with a unique challenge to create a bespoke product for them in the rural depths of Mexico. Together we created a stunning system that puts fish welfare at the forefront of their operations. This represents the beginning of a general acceleration across fish farming, and the wild sector linking welfare at harvest with economic value,” said Ace Aquatec CEO Nathan Pyne-Carter. “We are now working with barramundi farms in Australia, prawn farms in Europe and the trout sector in Canada as consumers and regulators insist upon more humane farming processes. We’ve been able to demonstrate that when farms take a welfare-first approach, they can see real economic gains in their business. This is critical if the mission to see all fish humanely harvested worldwide is to be achieved.”

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