

# Harmful Algal Blooms in the Arabian Sea Leading to Food Borne Health Issues

Citing that climate change poses a serious threat to the fisheries and aquaculture in the country, marine scientists have warned of increasing frequency and intensity of the Harmful algal blooms (HAB) in the Arabian Sea. According to



them, roughly a three-fold increase in HAB was reported during the period from 2000 to 2020. The HAB is a leading cause of aquatic food borne health risk to fish consumers and fish mortality that can potentially affect mariculture activities in particular and fisheries in general. They were speaking at One Health Aquaculture India workshop being organised by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) of the UK government Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute in Kochi.

Presenting the status of HAB in Indian waters, Dr Grinson George, Senior Programme Specialist of the SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), Dhaka said issuing early advisories are essential helping to shift the fish or plan early harvest in the mariculture. “Increased frequency and intensity of the HAB badly affect mariculture activities such as cage fish farming as it lead to fish kill”, he said. He further said that aquaculture associated health issues and water borne diseases among the farming community are on the rise, making the situation worse in the wake of extreme weather events such as floods, tropical cyclones and receding coastline.

The workshop funded by the Ocean Country Partnership Programme part of the UK Governments Blue Planet Fund is aimed at developing collaborative approaches to improve safe and sustainable aquaculture production in India, and to use the One Health framework to integrate key issues in animal, environmental and human health.

## Anti-microbial resistance a growing threat

The experts who spoke at the workshop also maintained that anti-microbial resistance (AMR) is a growing threat to the health system across the globe. Aquatic food systems and value chain also contribute to the AMR risk through multiple ways, and they felt that there is a need to follow safe aquatic health management options to contain the menace. Examples from different countries on the role of communities in combating anti-microbial resistance were presented by Dr David Verner-Jeffreys, Principal Scientist at the CEFAS, UK.

Scientists from the CEFAS, UK, including Dr Ben Maskerey, Dr Richard Heal and Dr Franck Dal-Molin besides Dr Kishore Kumar Krishnani from ICAR-CIFE, Mumbai, Dr Iddya Karunasagar, Nitte University, Manglore and former FAO expert and Dr Kuldeep K Lal, Director of ICAR-CIBA, Chennai among others spoke at the workshop. The workshop discusses how technologies can help understand and reduce the impact of supply chain hazards, and to build a framework for engagement between stakeholders interested in the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector. Senior fishery scientists and experts from the UK and India are attending the workshop that concludes on Wednesday.