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## Production estimates of farmed mussel in Kerala, India

Mussels were farmed from racks (off-bottom) method in the estuaries and backwaters of Kasargod, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Thrissur, Ernakulam and Kollam districts of Kerala during the period 2005-06 and this has contributed to 81% (8140 t) of the total farmed mussel production of 10060 t during the period 2005-06 (Table 1). The annual production of farmed mussels has shown a

consistent increase from 1997. On-bottom farming, which is a custom of simple re-laying of seed mussels with low inputs, is mainly in vogue in Kannur, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Kollam districts and has contributed to 19% (1920 t) of the production. The value of the mussel produced is estimated as Rs.80.6million (US\$1.79 million) on the basis of farm-gate price 45 INR=1 US \$ at 2006

Table 1. Details of the farmed mussel production, area used for farming and productivity of mussel farms

District	Production (t)				Area (in ha)				Productivity (t/ha)	
	Trestle	On-Bottom	Total	Percentage	Trestle	bottom	Total	percentage	Trestle	bottom
Kasaragod	7496	0	7496	74.52	12.14	0.00	12.14	47.5	617.5	
Kozhikode	211	511	722	7.17	0.82	3.11	3.93	21.1	257.1	164.3
Kannur	0	825	825	8.20	0.00	4.58	4.58	12.2	180.1	
Malappuram	399	558	957	9.51	1.40	3.30	4.70	18.4	285.7	169.1
Thrissur	5	0	5	0.05	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.0	617.3	
Ernakulam	25	0	25	0.25	0.04	0.00	0.04	0.2	617.3	
Kollam	4	26	30	0.30	0.01	0.18	0.19	0.7	615.4	143.6
TOTAL	8140	1920	10060	100.00	14.41	11.17	25.58	100.0	564.9	171.9
Percentage	80.91	19.09	100.00							

conversion rates) during the period 2005-06.

The total area utilized for rack farming during 2005-06 was estimated as 14.14 ha with 12.14 ha in Kasaragod (KAS). On bottom farming was done in 11.17ha in the state mainly at Kozhikode and Malappuram districts. At Kannur, a district between Kasaragod and Kozhikode, rack method of farming has till not been adopted by villagers, instead, on-bottom method is popular which has resulted in the utilization of 4.58 ha area and an annual production of 825 t of mussels. In the southern districts, mussel farming is done only in limited area and the production is comparatively low.

The average productivity for rack method was estimated as 564.9 t/ha, while for on-bottom method it was 171.9 t/ha. However, there was regional difference in productivity with high values in Kasaragode. The constraints faced by the mussel farmers was identified based on a survey conducted in the major mussel farming areas located at Cheruvathur, Padanna, Thrikaripur and Valiaparamba at Kasaragod, Elathur in Kozhikode and Vallikunnu at Malappuram.

All the farmers of KAS indicated marketing of farmed mussel as the major problem

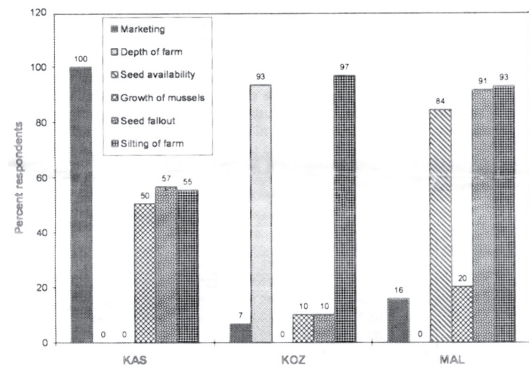


Fig. 1. Constraints of mussel farmers in the three districts of north Kerala

(Fig.1). Between 50 to 55% of the farmers also felt that seed availability, slipping of seed mussel and poor growth of mussels as problem. At Kozhikode, silting within the farm and reduction of depth at the farm site were cited as the major problems and only less than 10% of the farmers indicated marketing, seed slipping and poor growth of mussels as problems. Silting was the major problem of mussel farmers at Malappuram also, with 93% of farmers indicating their concern in the additional labour incurred to clear the silt on alternate days. Marketing, seed availability, and seed slipping were also problems of few farmers at Malappuram.

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