

AFFIA: Insect production pioneers join forces in Asean

The aim is to achieve a sustainable and efficient development of a young but determined sector: entomoculture in the ASEAN region.

Representatives in the Executive Council of the ASEAN Food and Feed Insects Association (AFFIA) include regional players from various countries: Thailand, Dr Wasaporn Chanput, from the Department of Science and Technology, Faculty of Agro-Industry, Kasetsart University, Massimo Reverberi from Bugsolutely and Paijit Sangchai from Star Bugs; Malaysia, Anne Deguerry from Entofood, and Bart Verstappen from EAWAG, Indonesia. AFFIA joins other regional associations which include the International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed (IPIFF) which is active in Europe and worldwide, UK's Woven Network CIC and North American Edible Insects Association (NAEIC).

"All players from the insects as feed and as food sectors are experts in different aspects of the industry and research. They are willing to learn from one another. The mission of AFFIA is to bring industry and research stakeholders from the insects sector in a collaborative movement towards the development of entomoculture, entomophagy and their related activities," said Nathan Preteseille, AFFIA's Coordinator, based in Thailand.

Some of AFFIA's goals are to define regulatory requirements at the national and ASEAN levels for insect products and to work in collaboration with related authorities at the national, regional and international levels. It will also work together to promote market access, at the local, regional and international levels, especially to access EU and US markets. There are subgroups for the two main sectors, food and feed. Food includes insect species having most of their applications as human food (e.g. crickets). Feed includes insect species used as ingredients in animal feed and waste management. AFFIA also promotes the human consumption of insects and works together on trans boundary issues to define shared positions (e.g. halal status).

This first meeting of its kind in Southeast Asia showed how shared development goals can overcome national differences.



Next will be to define detailed status and plan for activities to reach the association objectives through exchanges among the members. A mapping of the industry in Southeast Asia will be defined to ensure the association represents most of the insects' industry actors in the region.

In November 2016, AFFIA introduced insects as food and feed through a short course organised by the Food Security Centre at Kasetsart University, Thailand. The main expert from Laos, Dr Thomas Weigel, researcher on edible insects raised awareness on the nutritional benefits of edible insects as food. There was also a discussion on insects as a potential replacement for fish meal. The potential of insect meal for land animals was discussed by Dr Attawit Kovitvadh, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Kasetsart University. This was based on his PhD research on the use of black soldier fly larvae as a feed source for the rabbit. Nathan Preteseille discussed the use of insect meals in aqua feeds. Participants also had the opportunity to see insect production from farm to table with food tasting of seven products, from cricket energy bars to cricket pasta.

AFFIA hopes that this awareness on insects as feed will drive the development of sustainable food sources, overcome drawbacks on current food production systems and finally, create interest for this sector in the food industry. (www.affia.org)

The Europe-Asian Technology and Innovation Platform

Satisfying seafood demand is a key issue within global food security that should be addressed by increasing sustainable production and management practices. Southeast Asia is a dominant player in aquaculture production while Europe not only produces but also provides a cornerstone market for seafood, where more than 65% is imported.

EURASTIP will provide a new mechanism to create and reinforce international cooperation on sustainable aquaculture between Europe and Southeast Asia, involving stakeholders from both regions and focusing on actions that will provide mutual benefit. The EURASTIP consortium is made up of partners from Europe and Asia, whose organisations and personnel have the skills and experience to address and achieve these objectives. This consortium is supported by extensive networks to facilitate outreach to professionals and education and training for all stakeholders.

The core objective of the EURASTIP project is to evaluate and prepare for the launch of an international multi-stakeholder platform, the European-Asian Technology and Innovation Platform (EATiP), which will provide a new mechanism to create and reinforce international cooperation on sustainable aquaculture between Europe and Southeast Asia. This platform will comprise of stakeholders from Europe and Southeast Asia, and will focus on actions that will provide mutual benefits to both regions.

Under this EURASTIP platform, national pilot multi-stakeholder platforms (NMSP) will be created in Thailand, Vietnam and Bangladesh, involving industry, associations, researchers and teachers. EURASTIP will be linked to EATiP and will be the focal point for creating links between the European and Southeast Asian industry players and will help the development of partnerships for business opportunities and the promotion of innovation uptake.

EURASTIP will also help to identify and address common standards for planning and operation of sustainable aquaculture,