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RESEARCH REPORTS

Sustainable Aquaculture for a Secure Future

Title: Masculinization of Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) by Immersion in Androgens

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Date: 14 February 2006

Publication Number: CRSP Research Report 99-A1

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Abstract: The use of all-male populations increases the efficiency and feasibility of tilapia aquaculture. The objective of this study was to determine the efficacy of a short-term immersion procedure for masculinizing Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*). Two synthetic androgens were evaluated: 17 α -methyl dihydrotestosterone (MDHT) and 17 α -methyltestosterone (MT). Exposure (3 h) on 10 and again on 13 days post-fertilization to MDHT at 500 mg/l successfully masculinized fry in all experiments, resulting in 100, 94 and 83 \pm 2% males in Experiments 1, 2 and 3, respectively. Immersions in MDHT or MT at 100 mg/l resulted in significantly skewed sex ratios in Experiments 1 and 3 (MT resulted in 73 and 83 \pm 3% males; and MDHT resulted in 72 and 91 \pm 1% males) but not in Experiment 2. Immersion in MT at 500 mg/l only caused masculinization in Experiment 3. Although further research and refinement is needed, immersion of Nile tilapia in MDHT may provide a practical alternative to the use of steroid-treated feed. Furthermore, when compared with current techniques for steroid-induced sex inversion of tilapia, short-term immersion reduces the period of time that workers are exposed to anabolic steroids.

This abstract is excerpted from the original paper, which was in *Aquaculture*, 178:349–357.

CRSP RESEARCH REPORTS are published as occasional papers by the Program Management Office, Aquaculture Collaborative Research Support Program, Oregon State University, 418 Snell Hall, Corvallis, Oregon 97331-1643 USA. The Aquaculture CRSP is supported by the US Agency for International Development under CRSP Grant No.: LAG-G-00-96-90015-00. See the website at <pdacrsp.orest.edu>.