

Aquatic animal Welfare: What do we need to know?

Driving health, quality and profit in aquaculture



Animal Welfare applied to Aquaculture

Murilo Quintiliano

FAI Farms, Director of Aquaculture Strategy

A practical framework for assessments on aquaculture productions

Ralf Onken

FAI Farms, Chief Technology Officer

Preliminary Assessment of Tilapia Welfare in Thailand

Dr.Win Surachetpong

Kasetsart University, Thailand

Communicating welfare to the aquaculture industry

Marius Nicolini

FAI Farms, Project manager-Thailand





Animal Welfare applied to Aquaculture:

Taking advantages from
learned lessons of other
animal-based supply chains

Murilo Quintiliano

March 2023

Our why

Positive food systems for



People

and

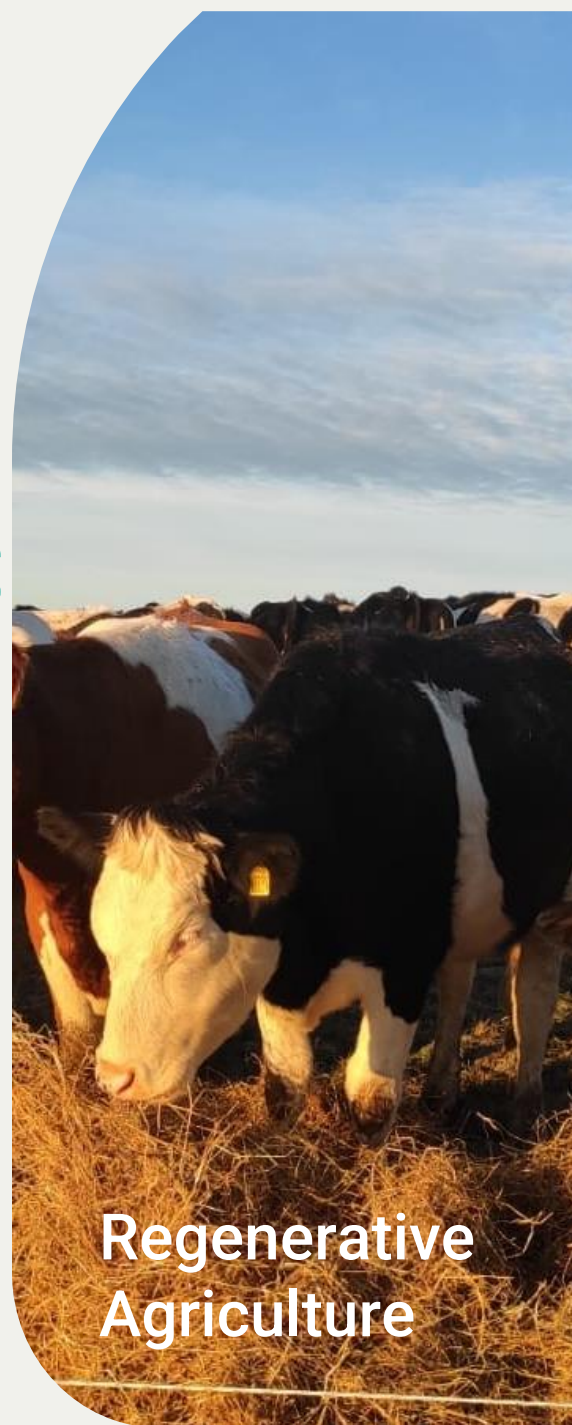
Animals

and

Planet

We create and deliver

FOOD ANIMAL SOLUTIONS



Regenerative
Agriculture



Welfare
Improvements



Impact &
Performance
Data

WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT

CREATIVE EXPERTS

We are creative problem solvers that embrace complexity.



TRUSTED PARTNER

We are collaborators and fun to work with. Ask our brand partners.



PRACTICAL RIGOUR

We are an impact focused team guided by science, data and practical expertise.



Reasons why Animal-based supply chains care about **ANIMAL WELFARE**



ETHICAL CONCERNS

ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY

FOOD SAFETY

ECONOMIC
SUSTAINABILITY

CONSUMER
DEMAND



What does it mean for **FISH WELFARE?**



ETHICAL CONCERNS

Fish are sentient beings with the ability to **feel pain, fear, and stress**. As such, there are ethical concerns associated with subjecting them to inhumane conditions or practices.

“We should care about it because it is the right thing to do”



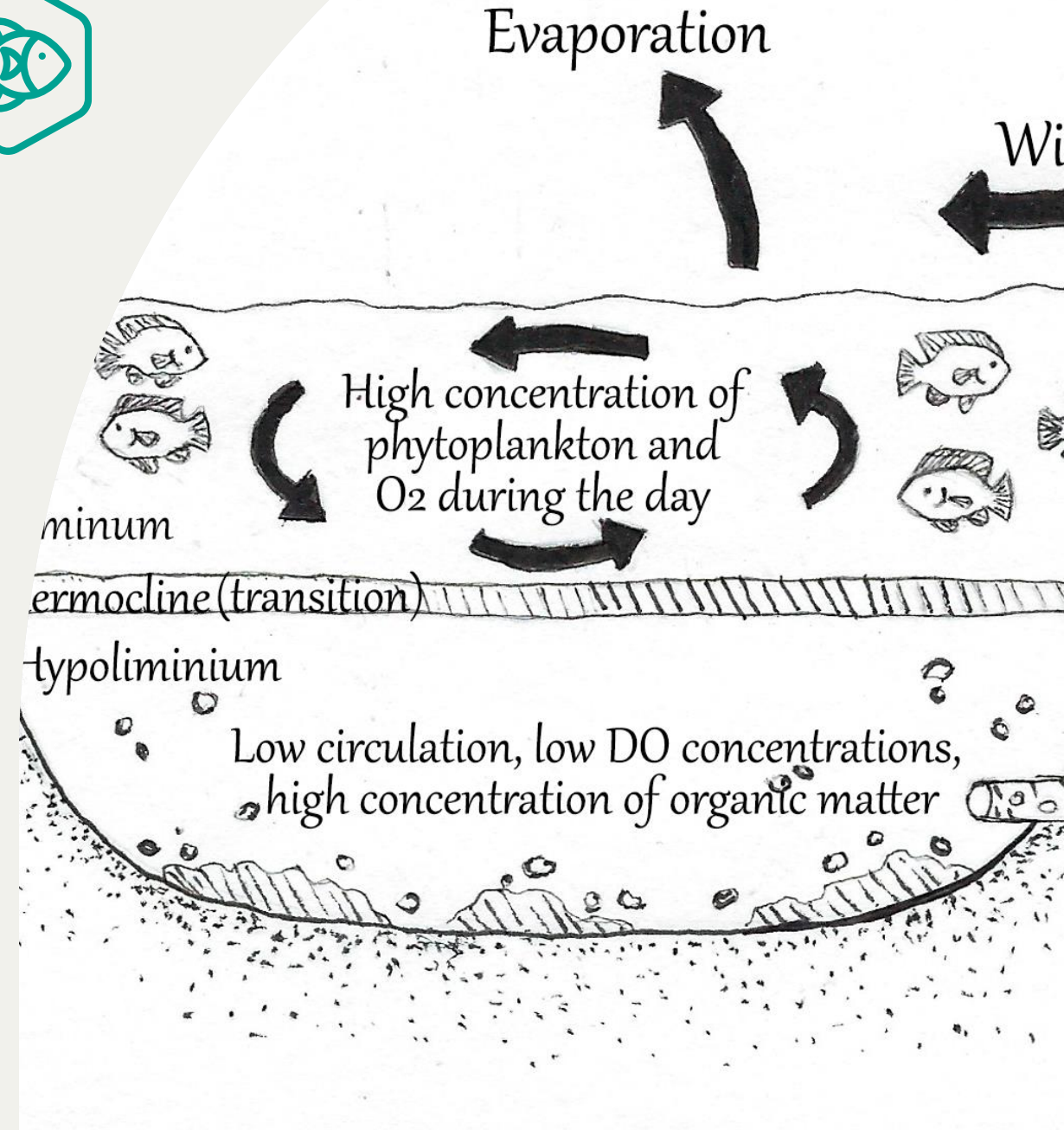
What does it mean for **FISH WELFARE?**



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The welfare of fish is closely linked to the health and sustainability of aquatic ecosystems.

By ensuring that fish are raised and harvested using humane and sustainable practices, we can help to protect and preserve these important ecosystems.



What does it mean for **FISH WELFARE?**



FOOD SAFETY

Poor fish welfare can lead to increased stress and disease, which can have negative impacts on the **quality and safety of the fish** we eat.

By ensuring good welfare for fish can help to reduce the risk of disease transmission and improve the quality and safety of the fish we consume.



What does it mean for **FISH WELFARE?**



ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Good **fish welfare** can contribute to the **long-term economic sustainability** of the industry.

By ensuring that fish are raised and harvested using humane and sustainable practices, we can help to maintain healthy fish populations and ensure that fishing and farming can **continue as viable industry for years to come.**



Testimonials

“Fish welfare is equal to good aquaculture practices. I am happy that tilapia production is engaging on this. I believe there are challenges, but it is possible to apply it on the farm routine, without losing production efficiency”



Emerson Esteves – owner, Global Peixes



Testimonials

“Although I have A small farm and supply locally, I am using the knowledge to reduce losses and secure constant improvement. FAI assessment protocol helps me to keep on track”



Paulo Tahara – Tahara Tescados, Dracena - Brazil



What does it mean for **FISH WELFARE?**

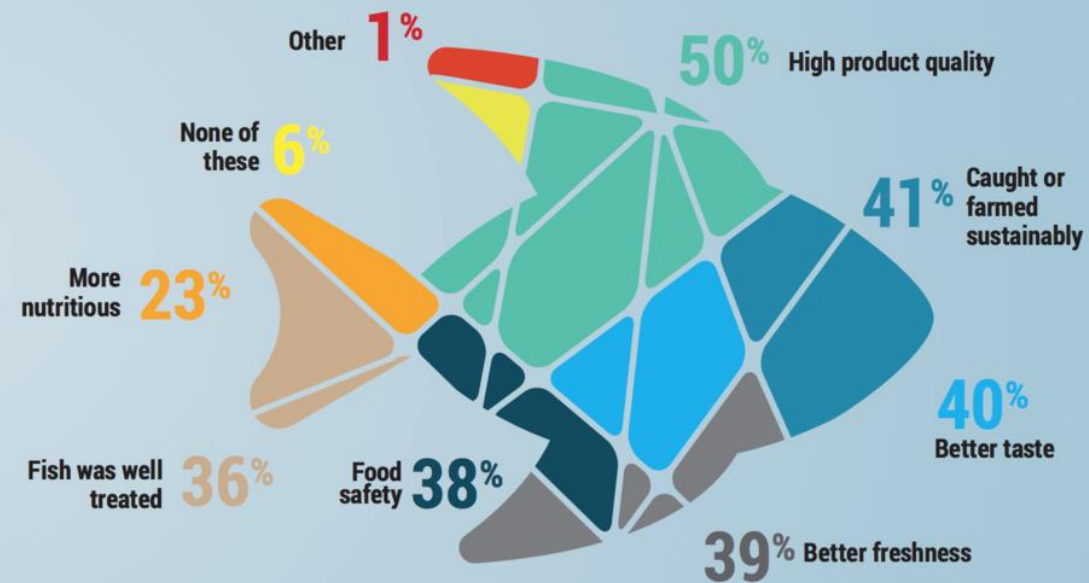


CONSUMER DEMAND

There is growing consumer demand for food that is produced in a humane and sustainable manner.

By caring about fish welfare, businesses can appeal to this demand and attract consumers who are looking for products that align with their values. This can lead to increased sales and greater customer loyalty.

Consumer opinions on the benefits of higher welfare fish products:



This is a reality on all animal-based supply chains...

Why would it be different for Fish and Shrimp?

The Business Benchmark on Farm Animal Welfare Report 2021

Appendix 2

Finfish species referred to in this briefing

amberjack (*Seriola* spp.)

basa (*Pangasius* spp.) (syn.: river cobbler)

common **carp** (*Cyprinus carpio*)

channel **calfish** (*Ictalurus punctatus*)

Arctic **char** (*Salvelinus alpinus*)

cobia (*Rachycentron canadum*) (syn.: black kingfish)

European **eel** (*Anguilla anguilla*)

halibut (*Hippoglossus* spp.)

pintado (*Pseudoplatystoma fasciatum*) (syn.: barred sorubim)

Atlantic **salmon** (*Salmo salar*)

Chinook **salmon** (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*)

coho **salmon** (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*)

European **seabass** (*Dicentrarchus labrax*)

gilthead **seabream** (*Sparus aurata*)

tilapia (*Tilapia* spp.)

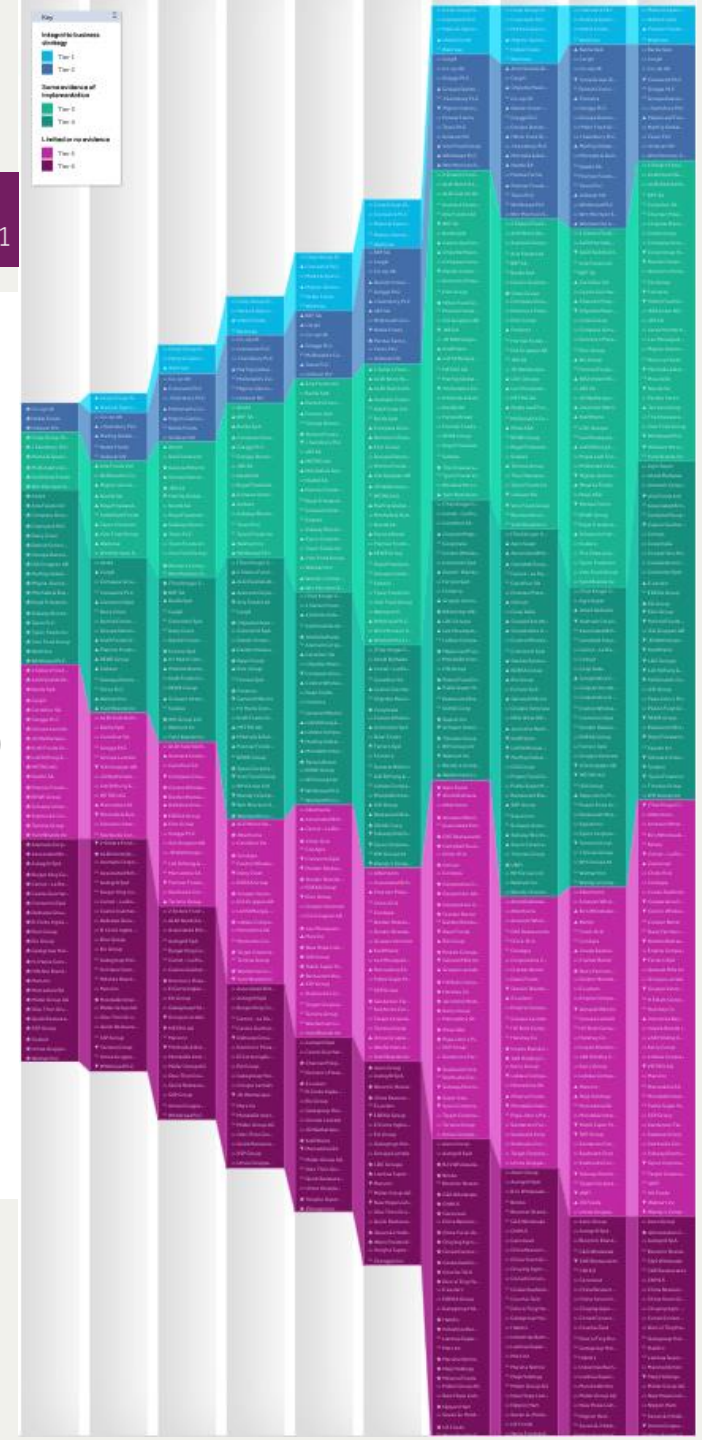
brown **trout** (*Salmo trutta*)

rainbow **trout** (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)

Atlantic bluefin **tuna** (*Thunnus thynnus*)

European **turbot** (*Psetta maxima*)

Ballan **wrasse** (*Labrus bergylta*)



Conclusions

- **Fish can feel and it is our responsibility to promote a better quality of life for people and animals**
- **All other animal protein sources are adapting to the new consumer requirements.**
- **It is not about :What”, but “How”. Farm engagement is critical.**

There is an opportunity for the aquaculture sector to take experiences from other supply chains and leapfrog the challenges.

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A practical framework for assessments on aquaculture productions



Ralf Onken, FAI Farms

March 2023

OUR APPROACH



Develop species specific operational Welfare Indicators, **for health, behaviour, nutrition and environment**



Develop welfare assessment Protocol and App **to help farmers monitor and implement welfare improvements**



Create interactive, free, multi-language online training to **implement welfare in aquaculture, from hatchery to slaughter**

TILAPIA EXAMPLE

- 10,000 academic articles reviewed (SIGMA methodology)
- Development of a Welfare Assessment Protocol
- Publication



Health	Environment	Behaviour	Nutrition
Eyes Jaws, Operculum Skin Fins Gills Spine Ectoparasite Mortality	Temperature, pH D.O. Alkalinity NH4 and NH3 Transparency Predators Interspecific species,	Respiratory Frequency Swimming Foraging behaviour Response to air and light Loss of consciousness	Amount of Feed Condition Factor (K) Protein level Feed Conversion ratio



Breeding



Hatchery



Nursery



Grow out



Slaughter House

3-point score

ASSESSMENT PROTOCOLS



TILAPIA

Tilapia on-farm welfare assessment protocol for semi-intensive production systems

Ana Silvia Pedrazzani^{1*}, Murilo Henrique Quintiliano², Franciele Bolfe², Elaine Cristina d. Sans¹, Carla F. Molento¹

¹Animal Welfare Laboratory (LABEA), Federal University of Paraná, Brazil, ²FAI Farms From Brazil, Brazil

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Aquaculture Research

CARP



REVIEW ARTICLE | Open Access |

New indices for the diagnosis of fish welfare and their application to the grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) reared in earthen ponds

Ana Silvia Pedrazzani Camila Prestes dos Santos Tavares, Murilo Quintiliano, Nathieli Cozer, Antonio Ostrensky

First published: 18 September 2022 | <https://doi.org/10.1111/are.16105>

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animals

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Open Access Article

Non-Invasive Methods for Assessing the Welfare of Farmed White-Leg Shrimp (*Penaeus vannamei*)

by Ana Silvia Pedrazzani ^{1,*} Nathieli Cozer ^{1,2,3}, Murilo Henrique Quintiliano ⁴, Camila Prestes dos Santos Tavares ^{1,3,5}, Ubiratã de Assis Teixeira da Silva ³ and Antonio Ostrensky ^{1,2,3,5}

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(This article belongs to the Special Issue **Monitoring of Behavior, Affective States, and Health to Identify Welfare Concerns of Farm Animals**)

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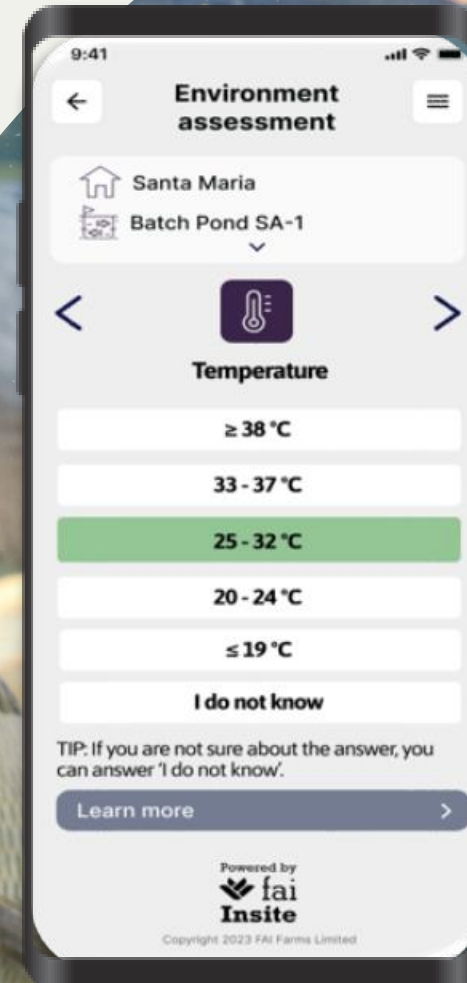
Versions Notes

<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/13/5/807>

TILAPIA EXAMPLE

- On-farm tested and validated in Brazil, Thailand and China
- Metrics reflective of robustness, commercial practicality and ability to utilize data
- Empowering farmers through self-assessment process
- Define what good, moderate, poor welfare looks like

Health	Environment	Behaviour	Nutrition
Eyes Jaws, Operculum Skin Fins Gills Spine Ectoparasite Mortality	Temperature, pH D.O. Alkalinity NH4 and NH3 Transparency Predators Interspecific species,	Respiratory Frequency Swimming Foraging behaviour Response to air and light Loss of consciousness	Amount of Feed Condition Factor (K) Protein level Feed Conversion ratio

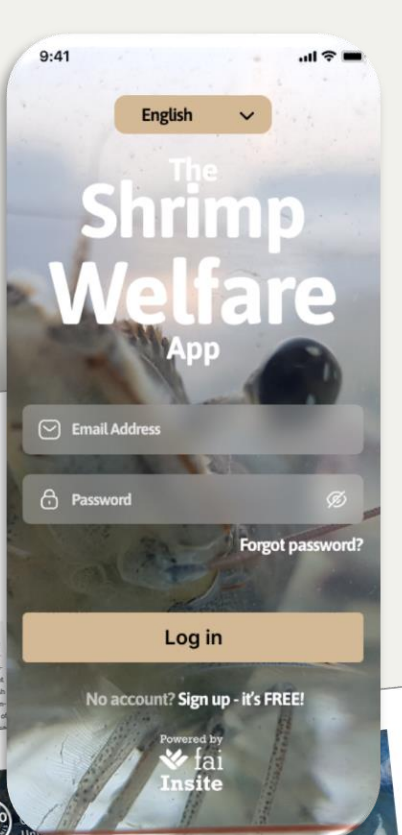
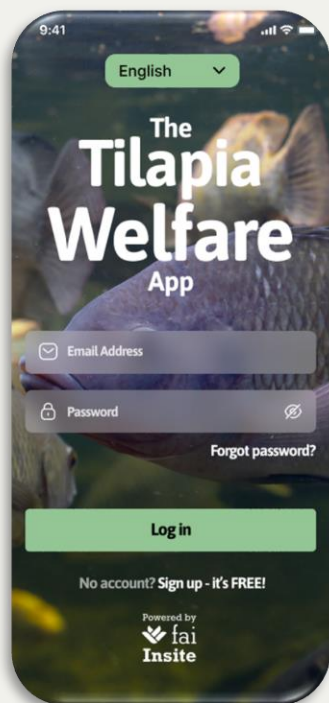


3-point score



ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

- 3-point score
- Practical to use
- Scientifically validated
- Currently for Tilapia, Shrimp and Carp





The researchers behind a practical welfare assessment protocol for tilapia production in Brazil hope it can act as a framework for the implementation of a welfare management system that can be applied by tilapia farmers around the world.

<https://www.fao.org/3/cc0407en/cc0407en.pdf>

ACHIEVEMENTS IN NUMBERS



	Tilapia, carp and Shrimp
Estimated Number of Animals	4,5 billion Fish and Shrimp (increasing)
Companies in Aquaculture - direct and indirect influenced	156
Global Retailers Direct Influenced	3
Certification Bodies, Universities and Investors	9
Number of People Trained (online and presential)	> 5.000



Applying the assessment protocol to other regions



Dr. Win Surachetpong
Kasetsart University, Thailand

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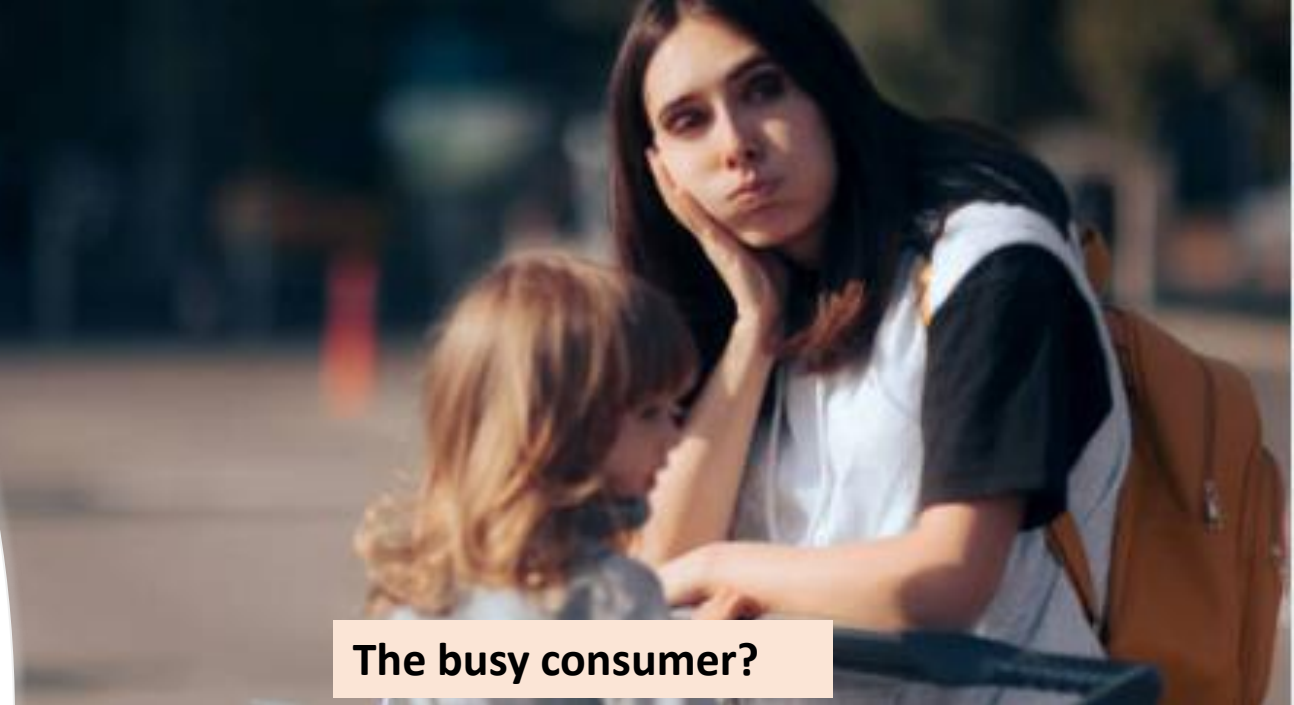
Preliminary Assessment of Tilapia Welfare in Thailand

Win Surachetpong (DVM, MSc, PhD, CertAqV)
Associate Professor
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Kasetsart University
Bangkok, Thailand





WHO CARES ABOUT TILAPIA?



The busy consumer?



The farmer, who takes care of the fish every day?



FARMER ASSESSMENTS ARE CRUCIAL

Each farming practice has its unique cultural practices and requires different assessment that contributes to the fundamental assessment of animal welfare.

CRITERIA TO EVALUATE WELFARE

- **Water quality:** Temperature, pH, DO, ammonia, nitrite, and nitrate
- **Behavioral observations:** Abnormal behaviors-lethargy, gasping, or erratic swimming
- **Physical condition:** Body weight, length, and overall appearance
- **Health:** Signs of disease, such as lesions or abnormal growths
- **Feeding behavior:** Changes in feeding behavior, such as a lack of interest in food
- **Environment:** The size and design of pond, overcrowding, inadequate water flow
- **Stress levels:** Measuring stress hormones, such as cortisol





Tilapia Welfare Assessment in Thailand

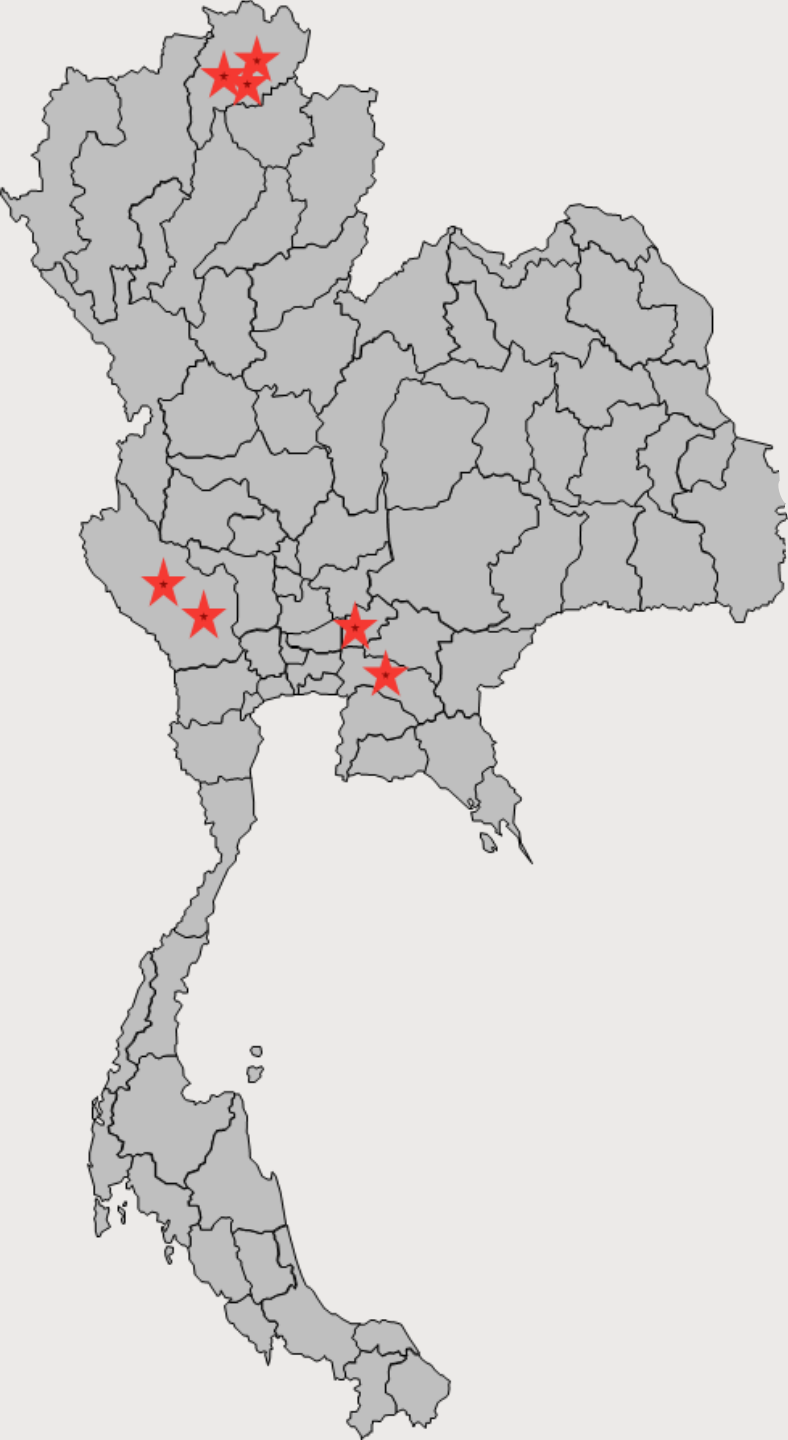


Challenges

- **No welfare assessment protocol for tilapia farms**
- **Commercial pressures may prioritize profit over fish welfare**
- **Tilapia welfare needs are not well understood by many fish farmers**
- **Difference in scales of tilapia production, extensive, semi-intensive, intensive**
- **Too many small-scale farmers**
- **Limited regulatory oversight & limited research**

Opportunities

- **Growing demand of Tilapia consumption**
- **Advances in technology**
- **Increase public awareness of the fish welfare**
- **Enhancing tilapia farming practices in accordance with the global quality standards**
- **Increase competitiveness for exportation**



What we are doing...in Thailand

- Surveyed 8 tilapia farms (Earthen ponds, cages)
- Collect primary data from the owners and workers related to:
 - Routine work at the farm, history
 - Fish rearing/ farm practice
 - Expertise and knowledge in fish health monitoring
 - Most concerned critical points
- Collect information by direct interviews and observing on farm activities

Assessment Framework



Health	Environment	Behaviour	Nutrition
Eyes Jaws, Operculum Skin Fins Gills Spine Ectoparasite Mortality	Temperature, pH D.O. Alkalinity NH4 and NH3 Transparency Predators Interspecific species,	Respiratory Frequency Swimming Foraging behaviour Response to air and light Loss of consciousness	Amount of Feed Condition Factor (K) Protein level Feed Conversion ratio



Preliminary results (May 2022 to February 2023)



Earthen pond at Chachoengsao, East



Cage farm at Kanchanaburi, West



External appearance

Water quality measurement

- Test kit - nitrite, alkalinity, ammonia
- Probe & meter - pH, DO, temperature, conductivity
- Secchi disk- water transparency



Harvesting process & method

- From harvesting, grading and transporting the fish to the merchant or consumers



Harvesting method



Grading of fish



Transportation

From the preliminary assessment

Improving tilapia welfare is one strategy to enhance the quality of the fish.

The assessment process for tilapia welfare is based on four indicators: environment, health, behavior, and feeding.

Tilapia welfare assessment is currently limited in Thailand.



Fish Health Criteria

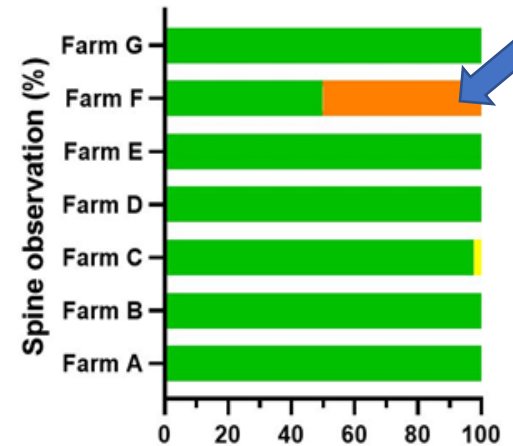
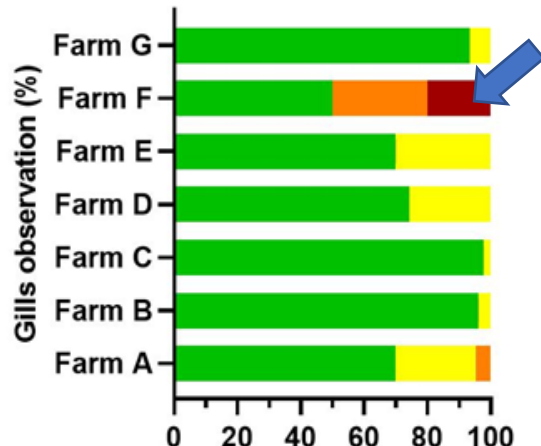
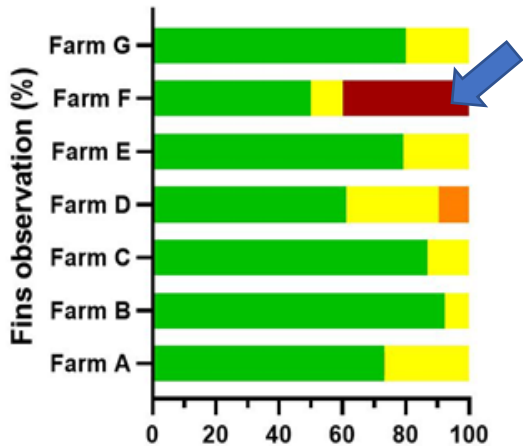
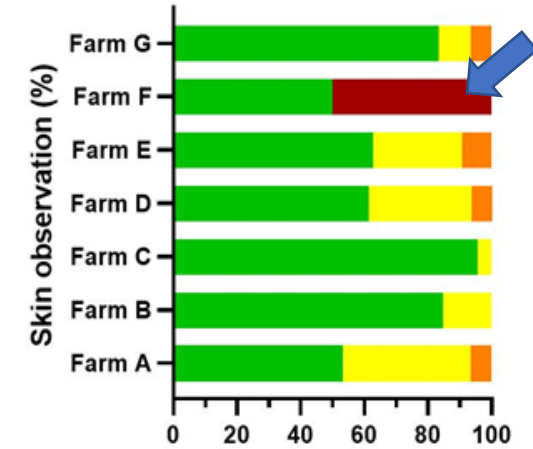
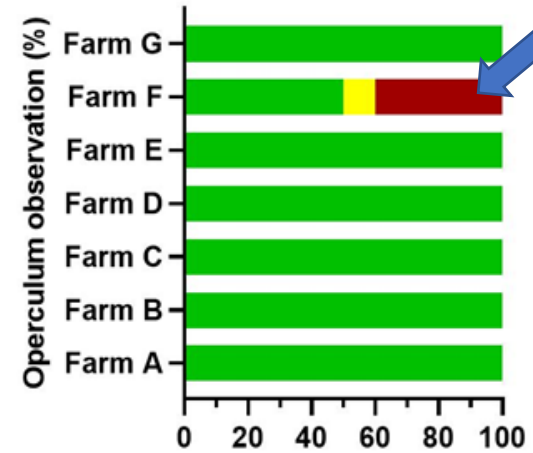
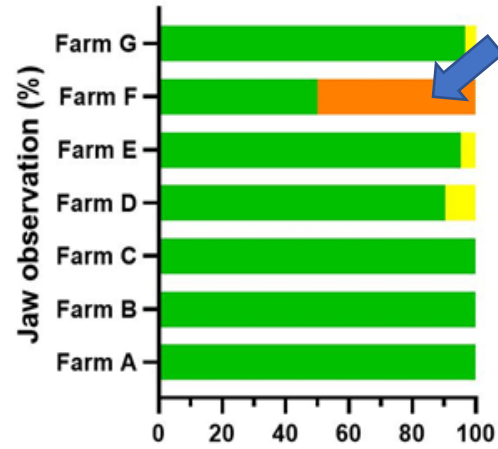
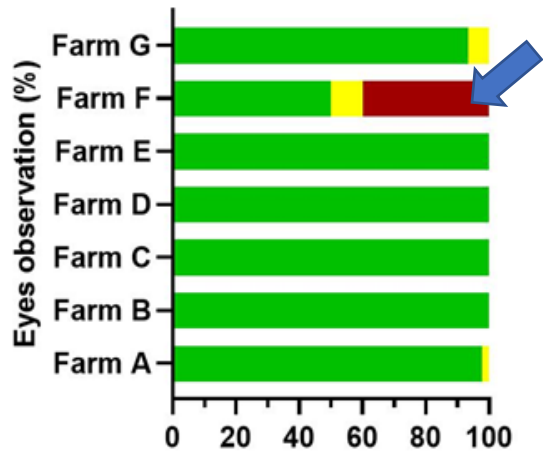
- In Thailand, the average survival rate for tilapia ranges from 60% to 80%.
- Farmers typically stock additional fry based on their past experiences.
- Common practice for farmers to use the same pond for juvenile and grow-out stages.
- Farmers typically rely on visual observations of fish behavior during feeding times.
- However, ensuring good welfare practices during the harvesting process can be challenging.
- Therefore, when assessing the welfare of tilapia, the harvesting and transportation processes should be excluded.

Overview of the preliminary findings

- Health indicator

Key:

Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4



Most of the fish in all farms exhibited good health.

Except for farm F which some fish showed signs of diseases.

Environmental criteria

- Assessing water quality is a crucial factor for good welfare of aquatic animals.
- Most common farming practice semi-intensive, intensive methods, creating a highly natural environment in the earthen ponds.
- Most farms located near water resources e.g. river, dams
- Water quality varied among farms, with some farmers preferring green water ponds.
- Most farmers only inspect the appearance of water in the pond (no water quality testing).



Environmental scores

Most farms showed good environmental score.

Farms A, B, C, D, and E are earthen ponds with no water flow while F and G are open cages inside river with continuous water flow.

Raising system	<i>Earthen ponds</i>						<i>Cage</i>							
Environmental Indicator	Farm A		Farm B		Farm C		Farm D		Farm E		Farm F		Farm G	
	value	score	value	score	value	score	value	score	value	score	value	score	value	score
Temperature (°C)	28.4	1	28.4	1	30.0	1	30.4	1	30.0	1	27.0	1	27.8	1
pH	8.5	1	8.0	1	8.7	2	7.7	1	6.8	1	7.5	1	7.5	1
Transparency (cm)	20	3	21	3	18	3	24	3	15	3	35	1	30	1
DO (%)	106.2	4	70.8	1	117.8	4	85.2	1	45.0	3	77.3	1	66.2	2
NH ₃ (mg/L)	0.00	1	0.00	1	0.00	1	0.01	1	0.08	2	0.0	1	0.0	1
NO ₂ ⁻ (mg/L)	0.00	1	0.00	1	0.00	1	0.10	1	0.00	1	0.0	1	0.0	1
Alkalinity (mg/L)	102	2	85	1	34	1	102	2	85	1	119	2	119	1
Shading (%)	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3
Predators	UP	3	UP	3	UP	3	UP	3	UP	3	UP	3	UP	3
Inhabitants	UP	3	A	1	A	1	A	1	UP	3	A	1	A	1
Density (fish/m ²)	0.55	1	2.50	1	2.03	1	1.79	1	1.71	1	60.0	1	60.0	1

*UP; Uncontrolled presence, A; Absence

Nutrition Criteria

- The low price of tilapia makes the farmers trying to reduce costs by using inexpensive feed.
- Some farmers use by-products from agriculture to reduce costs and maximize profits.
- Data collected in this study, derived from farms with commercial feed and natural feed.



Nutrition values and scores

Nutritional parameters are in good conditions in most of the farms

Nutritional indicators	Farm A		Farm B		Farm C		Farm D		Farm E		Farm F		Farm G	
	Value	Score	Value	score	Value	Score	Value	Score	Value	Score	Value	Score	Value	Score
Fish weight (g) (mean±SD)	710.6±167.2	-	306.2±39.0	-	151.5±28.5	-	508.6±116.2	-	246.9±27.9	-	292.0±72.6	-	106.6±29.6	-
Fish age (days)	213	-	115	-	90	-	180	-	186	-	75	-	75	-
Use commercial feed	Yes	-	Yes	-	Yes	-	Yes	-	No	-	Yes	-	Yes	-
Crude protein ratio (CP) (%)	25	3	30	1	30	1	30	1	ND	ND	30	2	32	1
Feed conversion ratio (FCR)	1.1	1	1.3	1	1.3	1	1.2	1	ND	ND				
K factor (mean±SD)	2.53±0.27	3	2.22±0.20	2	2.53±0.21	3	2.26±0.21	2	2.20±0.17	2	3.7±1.44	3	2.2±0.34	2

Major constraints

- Some farmers may not be interested in conducting welfare assessments.
 - Efforts should be made to educate or inform them of the benefits of doing so.
- Farmers are often not familiar with welfare assessment concepts/tools.
- Some small-scale farmers have poor data recording practices.
- Economic constraints can also hinder the adoption of welfare assessment practices.
- There is limited availability of tools for monitoring and measuring fish welfare.

Conclusion

- Ensuring the welfare of tilapia is an important and complex issue that **requires attention and action** from individuals, organizations, and governments.
- Tilapia can experience pain, stress, and suffering, and it is **our responsibility to minimize these experiences as much as possible**.
- Achieving this goal requires a **better understanding** of the welfare needs of tilapia, the development of appropriate monitoring and assessment tools, and the implementation of effective welfare practices.
- To achieve better welfare practices for tilapia, there must be a **willingness to invest** in it, despite the potential economic costs.

The team



Dr. Win Surachetpong



Thitima Purimayata



Dr. Aslah Mohamad



Dr. Neetu Shahi

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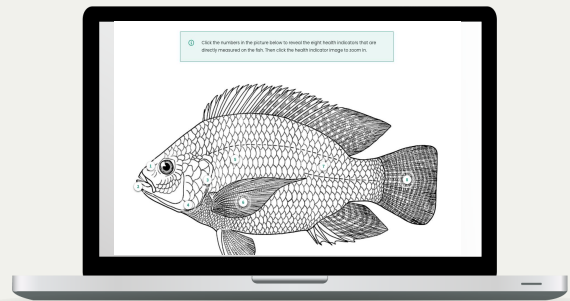


Communicating welfare to the aquaculture industry

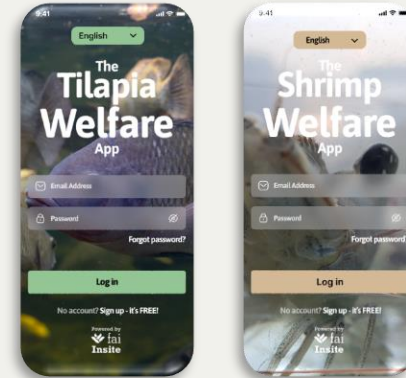
Marius Nicolini, FAI Farms

March 2023

COMMUNICATING WELFARE TO THE AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY



Online course



Mobile application



Websites-Social Media



Workshops (Online, on-farm)

TILAPIA WELFARE ONLINE COURSES




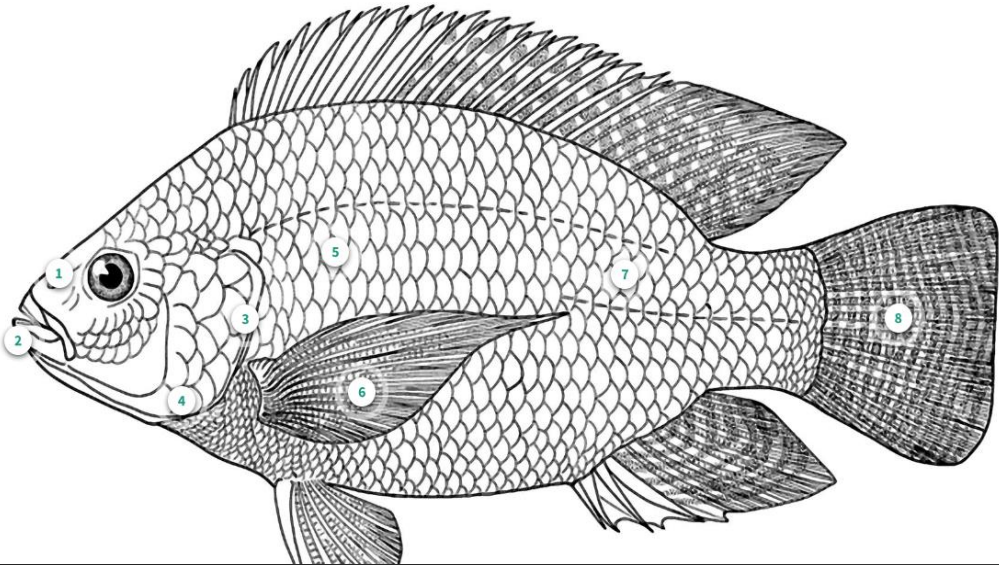
INDICATORS

NUTRITION

NEW!

-  **LOCATION**
Online
-  **LANGUAGE**
English
Portuguese
-  **PROVIDER**
FAI Farms
-  **AVAILABILITY**
Free Course

 Click the numbers in the picture below to reveal the eight health indicators that are directly measured on the fish. Then click the health indicator image to zoom in.



Welfare Indicators

Accessible on different devices and languages



Interactive

Using best practice e-learning pedagogy



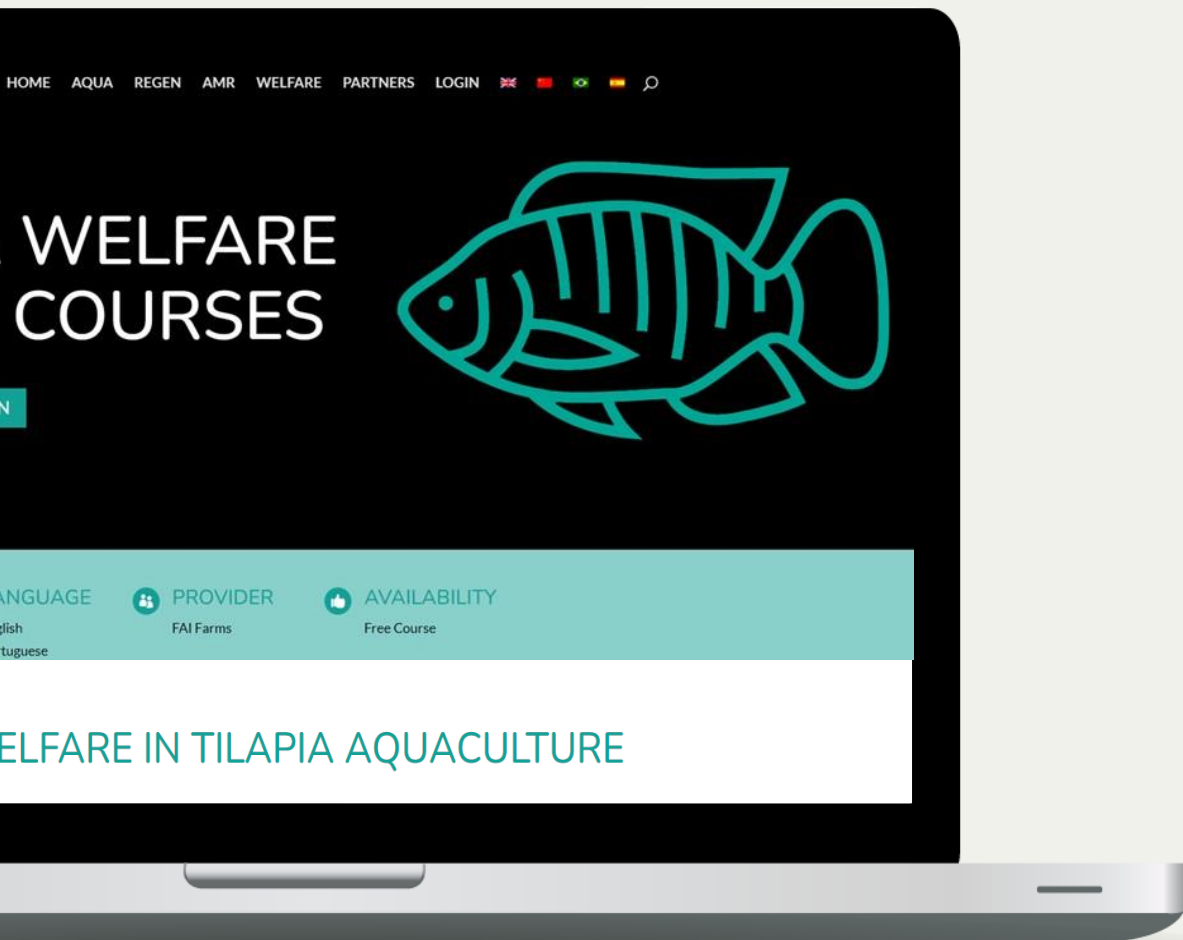
Self-taught

Secure and safe environment to learn and discuss.



Certificate

Quizzes and free certificate on completion.



1

Tilapia Welfare Indicators



2

Tilapia Nutrition and Welfare



3

Tilapia environment and welfare

4

Tilapia health and welfare

5

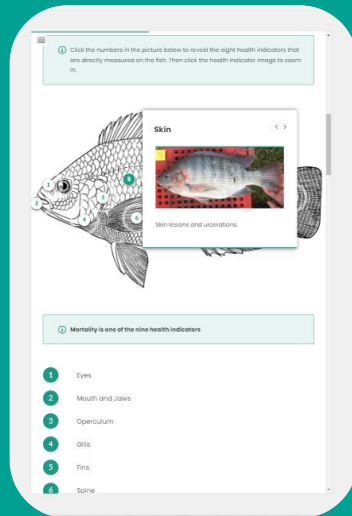
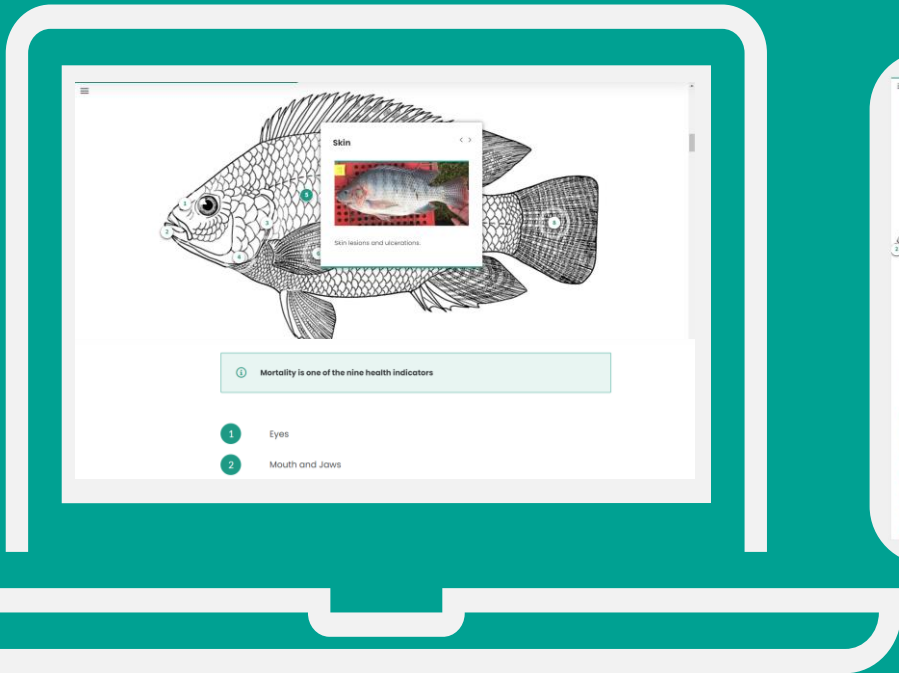
Tilapia behaviour and welfare

Courses available – click to open
Courses to be published





E-learning that is responsive accessible in different devices



Hasim Djamil, DVM • 2nd
Veterinarian di Regal Springs Indonesia
1w • 🌐

+ Follow

This training module are attractive and pleasant, make some complex things simple and easy to understand. certainly, it was enlightening for me to implement a similar module and share it to my team. Massive thank [Sara Barrento Øistein Thorsen](#)
[#elearning](#) [#fishwelfare](#) [#tilapia](#) [#health](#) [#aquaculture](#)



Certificate of Training

This is to certify that

Hasim Djamil

has completed the course on

Tilapia Welfare Indicators

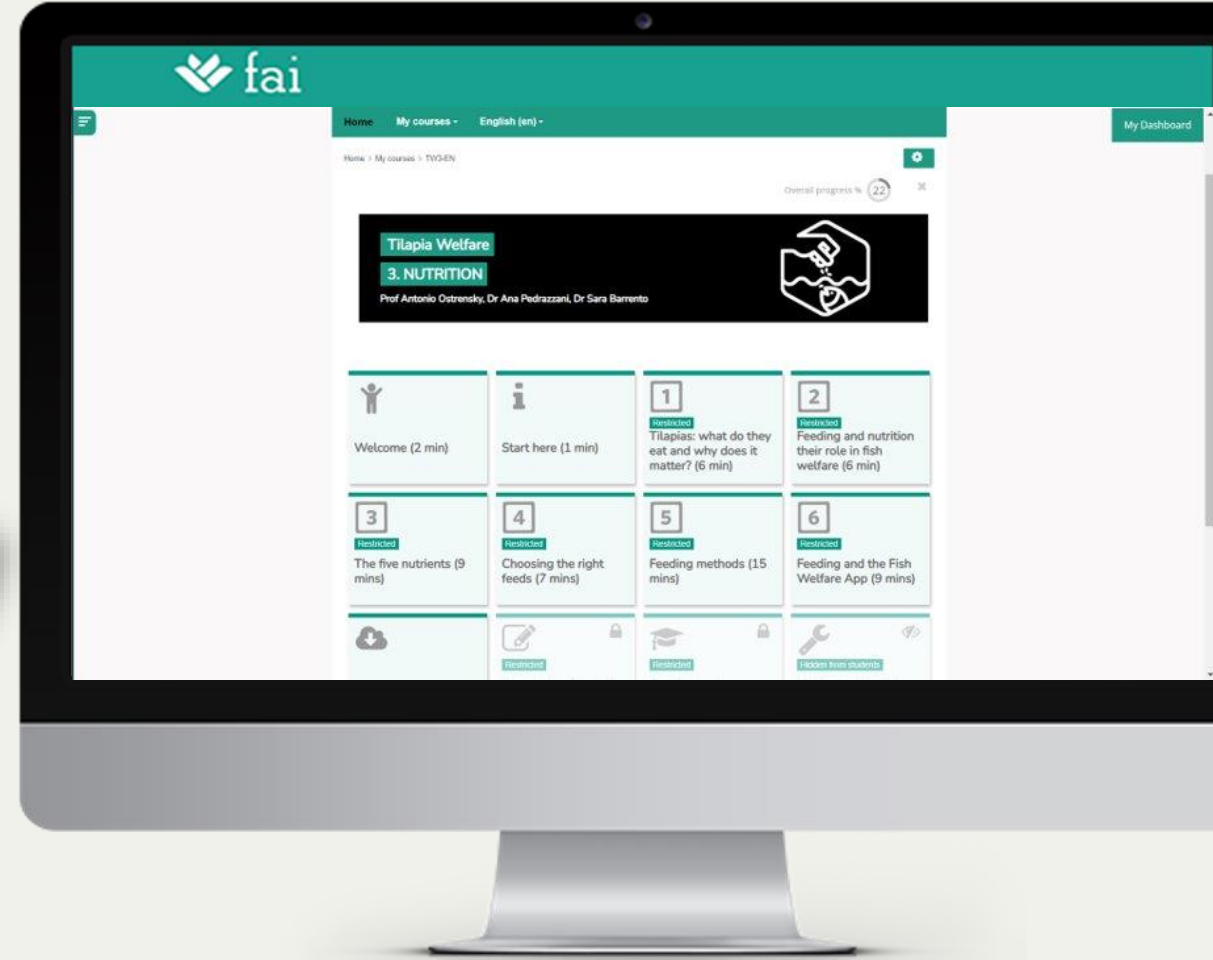
and is aware of tilapia welfare, and the basic principles to assess tilapia welfare, based on the nutrition, environment, health and behavioural welfare indicators.

Completed on: 26 February 2023

Tilapia, Shrimp, Carp

5 Modules

5 Languages



A free welfare toolkit for any farmer.

A **practical and free app** for Tilapia farmers has been developed for day-to-day use from breeding to slaughter

Will be available in 5 languages:

Thai
English
Spanish
Portuguese
Chinese



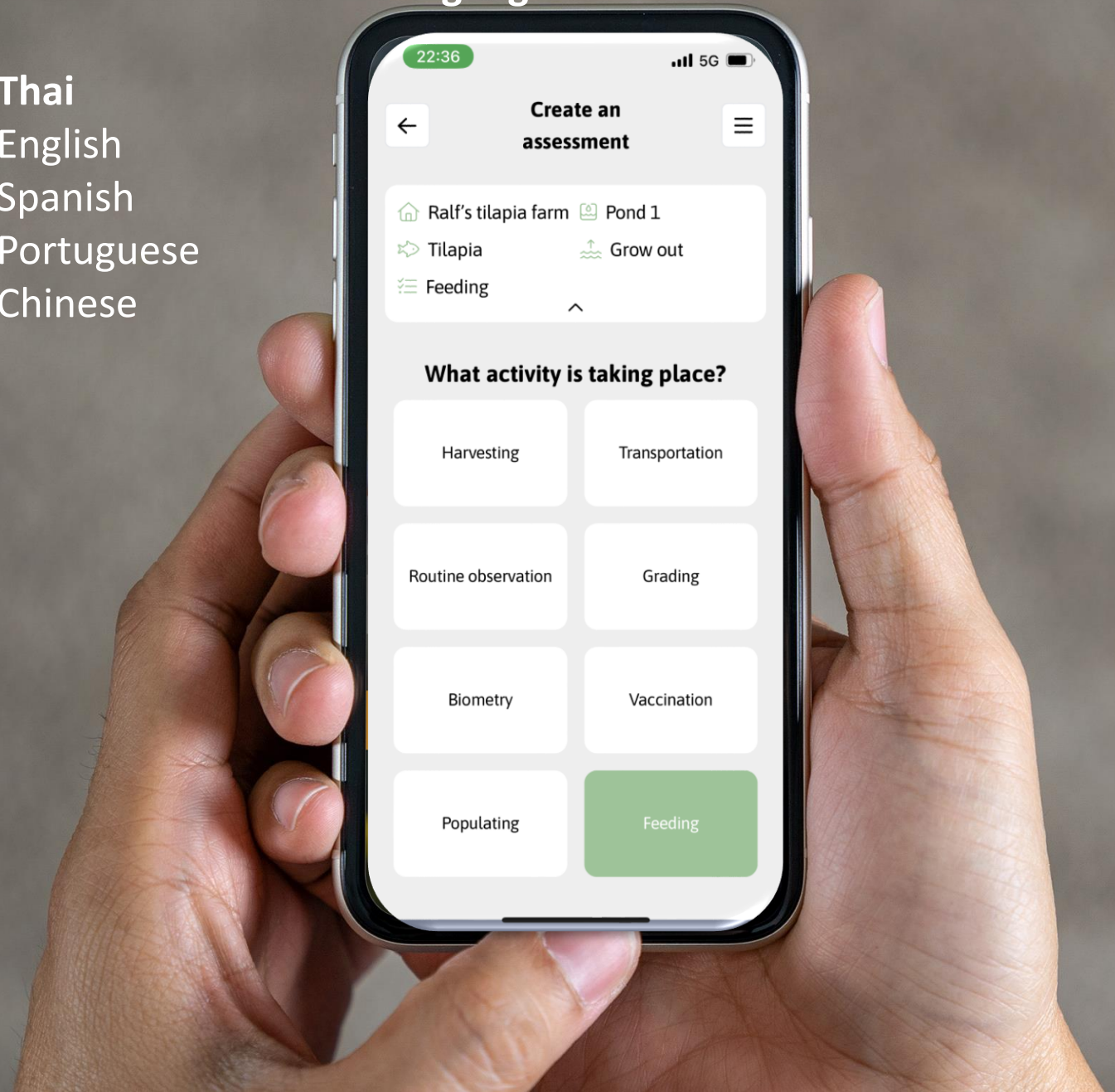
A free welfare toolkit for any farmer.

Perform an **assessment tailor made** to:

- Production type
- Production system
- Fish size
- Activity

Will be available in 5 languages:

Thai
English
Spanish
Portuguese
Chinese



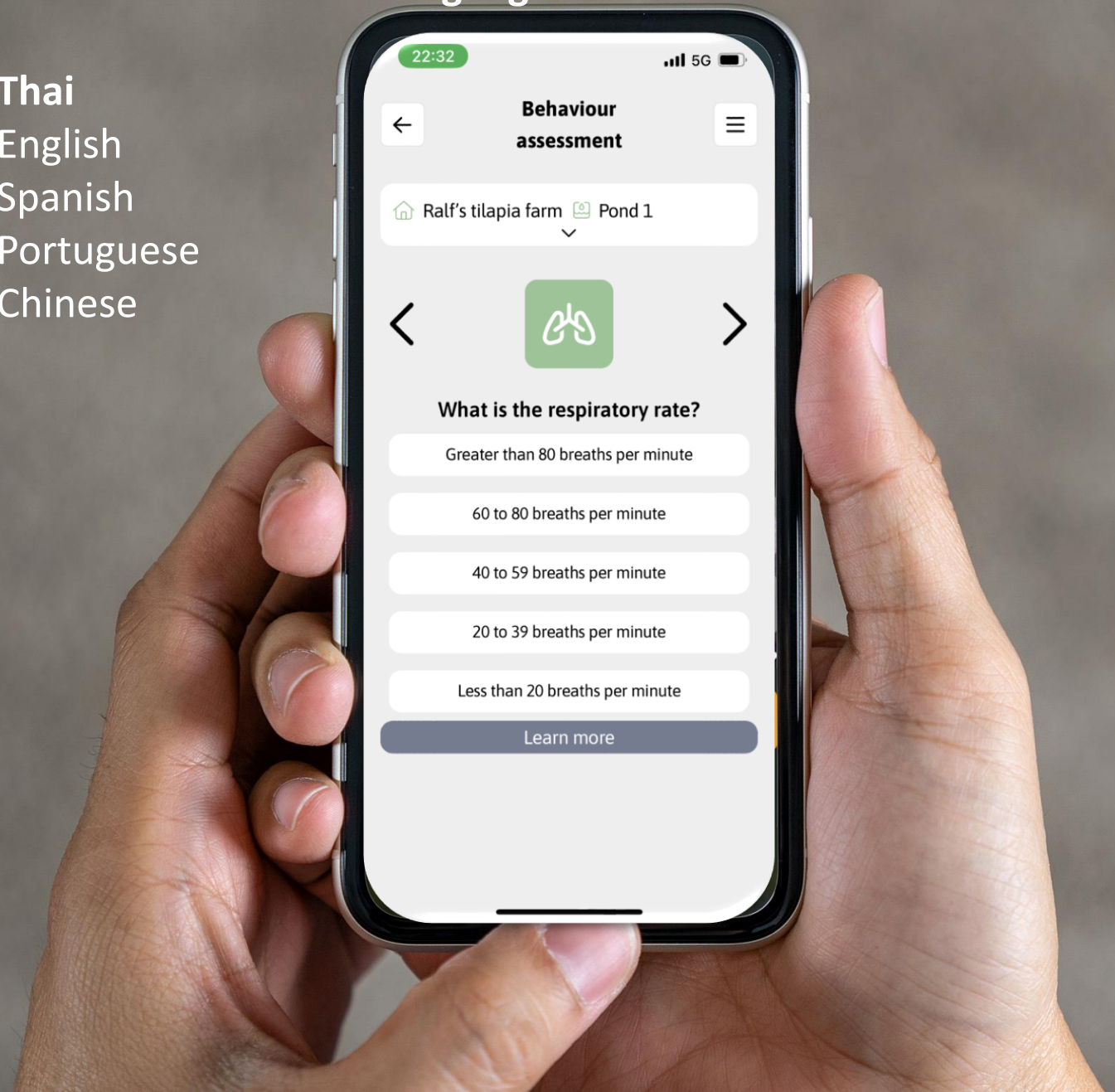
A free welfare toolkit for any farmer.

Indicators to be recorded in **4 assessment categories**

- Environment
- Nutrition
- Health
- Behaviour

Will be available in 5 languages:

Thai
English
Spanish
Portuguese
Chinese



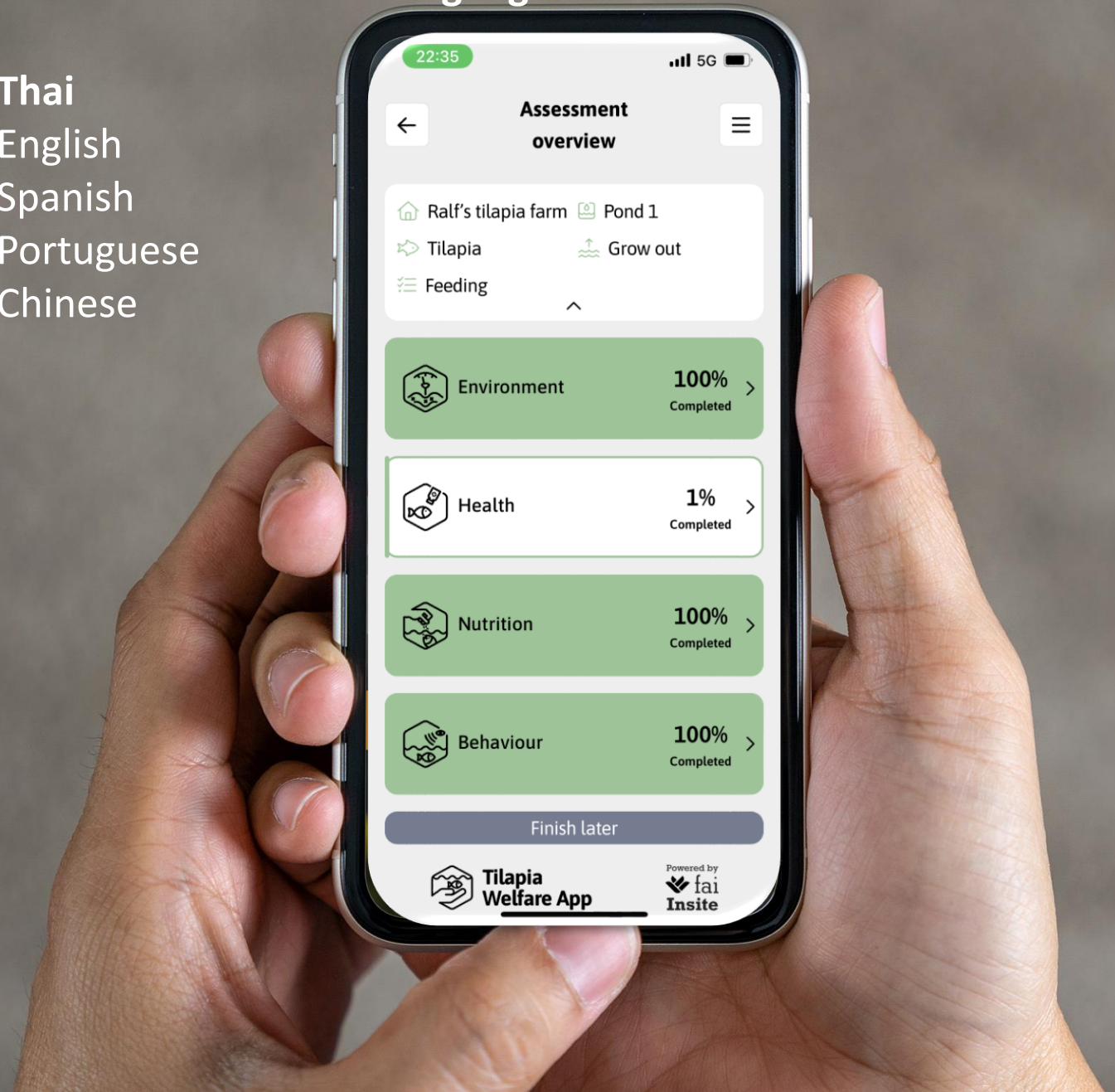
A free welfare toolkit for any farmer.

Online and Offline

Stop and restart assessment at any time

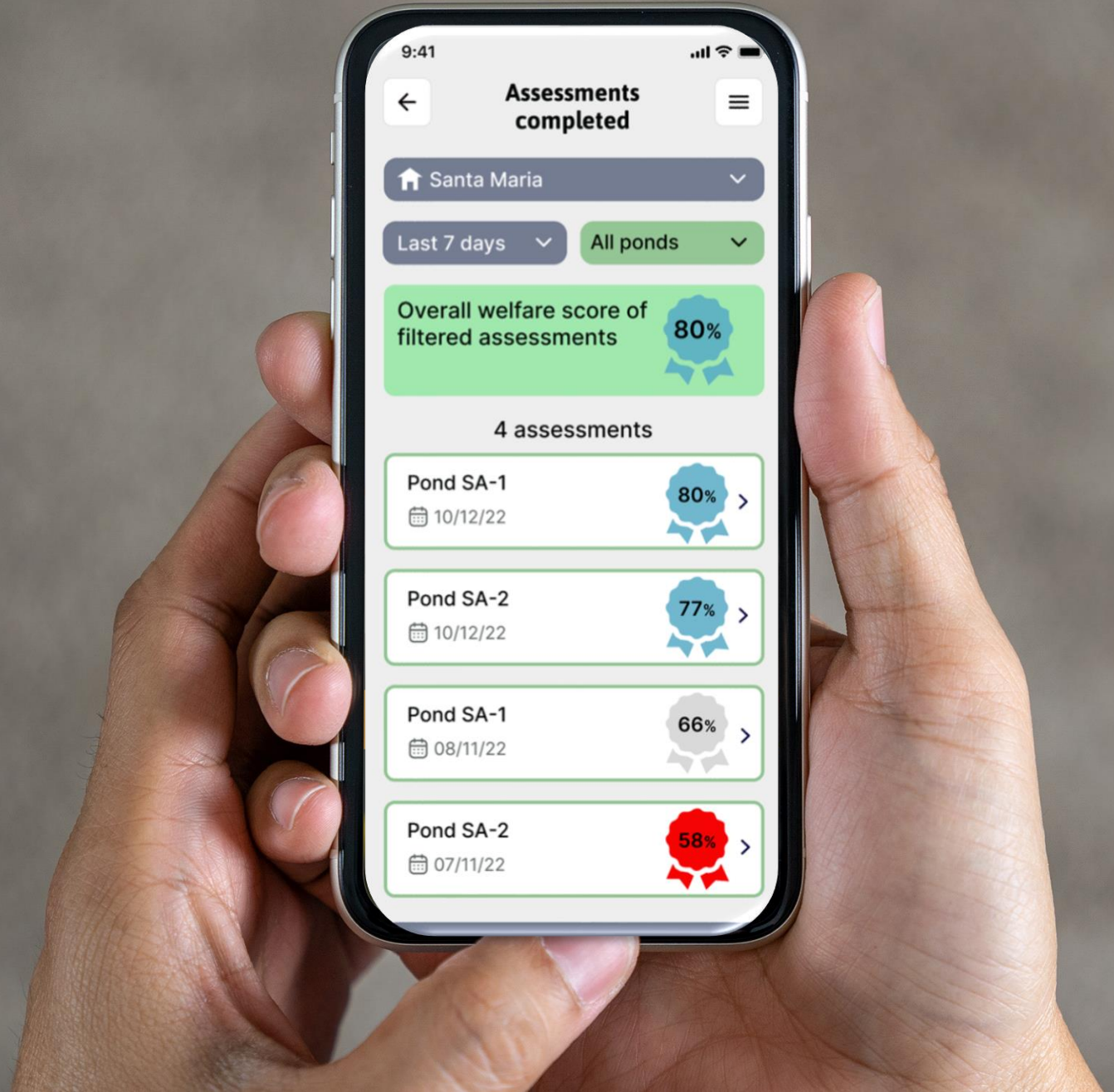
Will be available in 5 languages:

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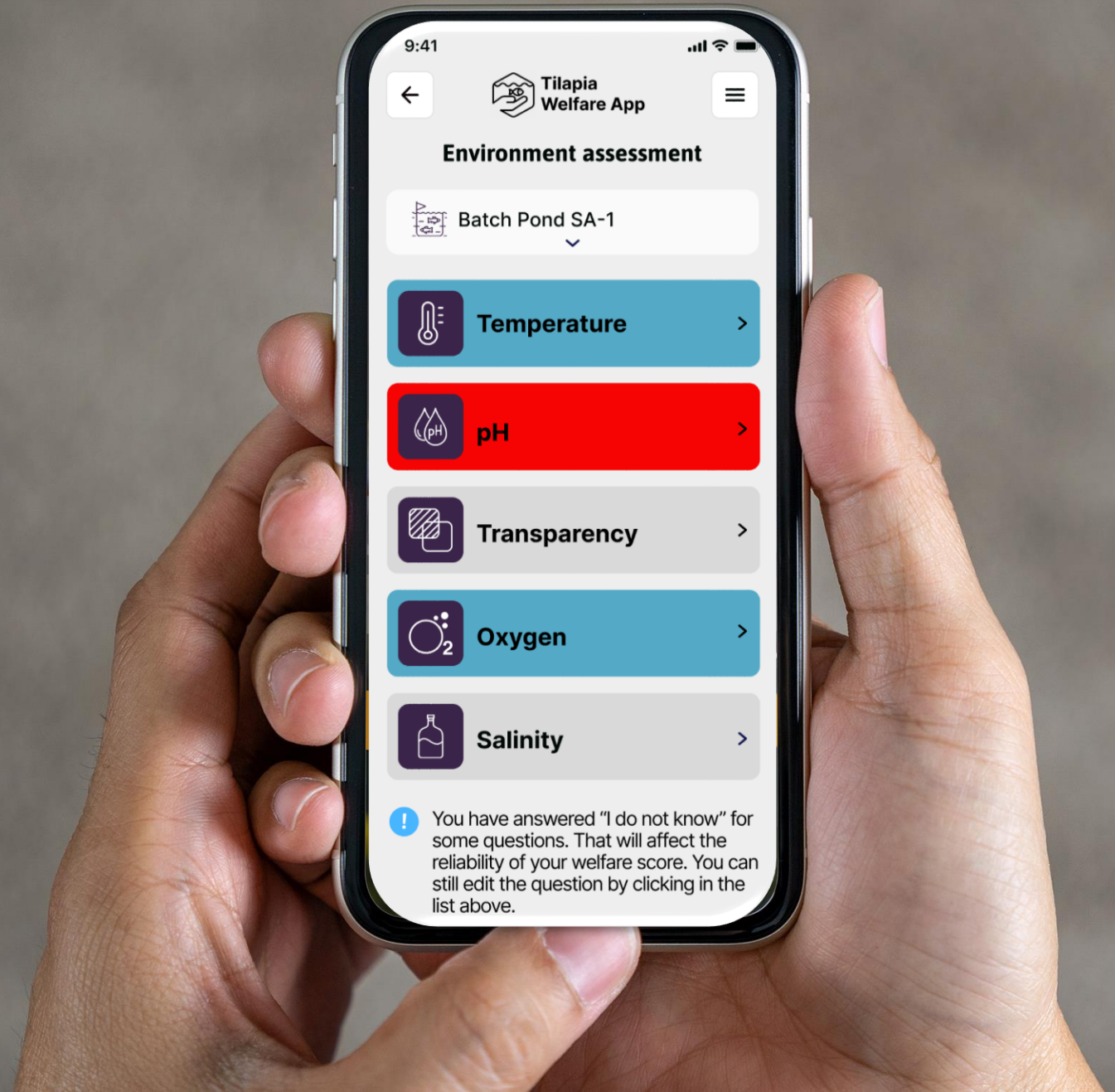
A free welfare toolkit for any farmer.

After performing an assessment. The app gives an **instant welfare score** of your pond/tank/cage



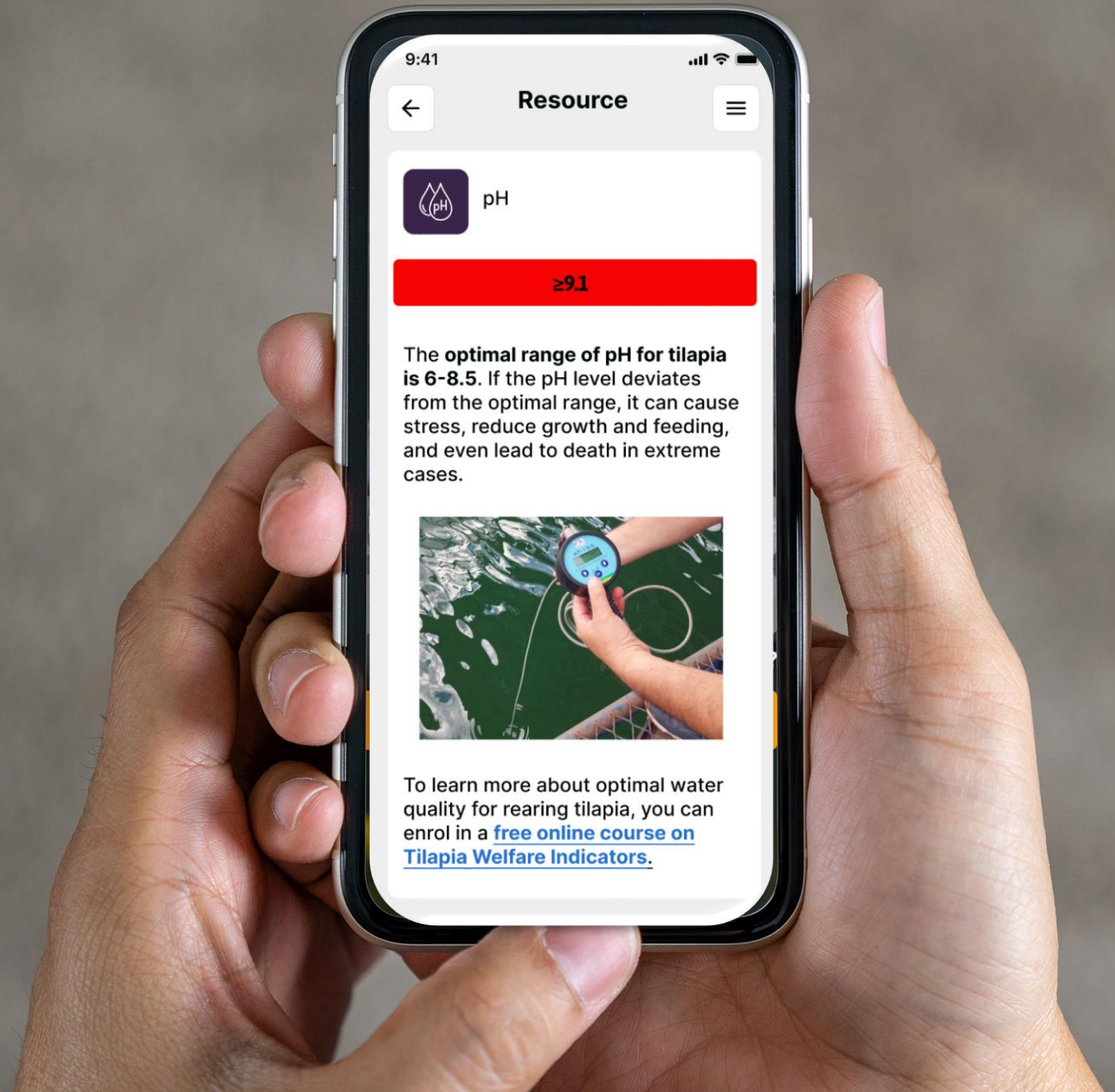
A free welfare toolkit for any farmer.

The app users can dig into the report to look at **individual indicator score** ...



A free welfare toolkit for any farmer.

.... And can have access to a **feedback** with links to **resources** available to help farmers find a solution to improve their animal welfare



Improve production

Reduce costs

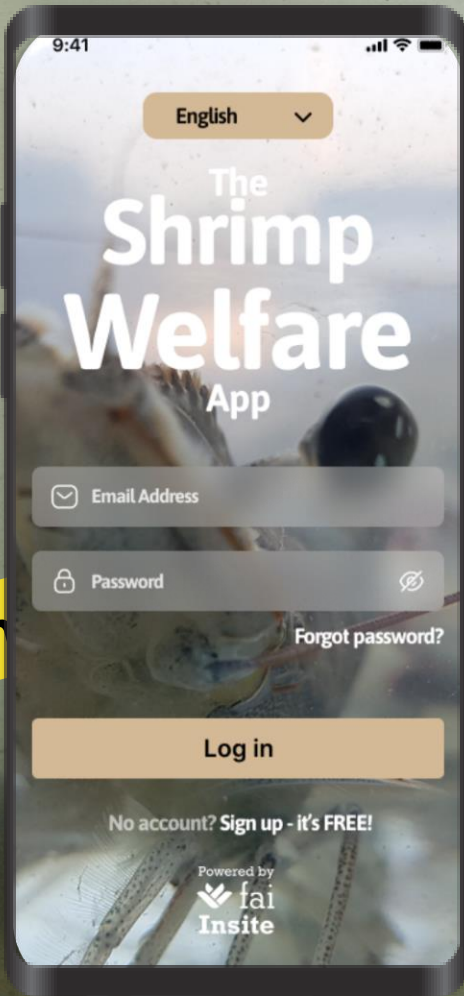
Increase profitability

Assess fish welfare

[Learn More](#)

Shrimp welfare App

About Event Contact



Under Construction

Improve production
Reduce costs
Increase profitability
Assess shrimp welfare



Health and welfare

📡 80744 views

The Aquatic Animal Health Programme assists members to reduce the risks of aquatic animal disease impacting the livelihoods of farmers, national economies, trade, environment and human health by:

- Improving regional cooperation in aquatic animal health and welfare.
- Developing and implementing national strategies on aquatic animal health.
- Improving surveillance, reporting and response to disease emergencies.
- Promoting harmonisation of diagnostic procedures and risk assessment.
- Widespread promotion of better aquatic animal health management practices at the farm level.

Key activities

Key activities of the programme include:

- Convening the annual meeting of the Asia Regional Advisory Group on Aquatic Animal Health, coordinating the Quarterly Aquatic Animal Disease Report and bringing regional issues to the attention of global standard setting bodies such as the Office International des Epizooties.
- Establishment and expansion of a three-tier shared resource in aquatic animal health.
- Development of farm-level health management tools for key aquaculture commodities.
- Supporting regional disease surveillance and reporting.
- Strengthening aquatic animal health and biosecurity in the region.
- Facilitating harmonisation in disease diagnostic techniques.
- Developing resource material in support of diagnosis and surveillance.

Contacts

- National Aquatic Animal Health Coordinators and OIE National Focal Points for Aquatic Animals.

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Related



Social media



English



Thai



Portuguese



Technical workshops and trainings



- ➔ **Tilapia welfare assessment**
- ➔ **Shrimp welfare assessment**

- ✓ What do we assess
- ✓ How do we assess
- ✓ Results and feedback



THANKS & QUESTIONS

- Next steps

