

# Threat looms over tilapia industry

Date: Monday, June 12, 2017

By ACE JUNE RELL S. PEREZ



Photo courtesy of agrobusinessng.com

DAVAO. Tilapia, one of the world's primary fish for human consumption. (Contributed photo)

THERE is an imminent threat on Tilapia industry following the warning released last May 26 by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) that there is an outbreak of Tilapia Lake Virus (TiLV), a highly-contagious disease among farmed and wild tilapia. The TiLV has been confirmed in five countries already: Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Israel, and Thailand, the FAO reported in its website. "Tilapia producing countries need to be vigilant, and should follow aquatic animal-health code protocols of the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) when trading tilapia," the FAO warned. With this, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) said they are on heightened alert but assured that, fortunately, no report for the case of TiLV in the Philippines. "The Philippines is strict in the implementation of imported live fish. The mentioned countries who suffered this virus infection are intensive culturist. So far, our stocking rate is based on the best aquaculture practice," BFAR-Davao Director Fatma said. She added that if there is an alarming situation on death of tilapia, BFAR has the capacity to investigate and will automatically conduct regular monitoring. At present, TiLV surveillance is now being conducted in China, India, and

Indonesia, and is also being planned in the Philippines, FAO said. The FAO also encouraged countries to launch public information campaigns as many aquaculturists of tilapia are smallholders. The FAO itself admitted that not much is known about TiLV, acknowledging many knowledge gaps about the disease that need more research. The TiLV belongs to the Orthomyxoviridae family of viruses, which is also the same family to which the Infectious Salmon Anaemia virus belongs, which wrought great damage on the salmon farming industry, FAO added. Although it does not pose a risk to humans, it can decimate stocks and cripple fish farmers. “The disease shows highly variable mortality, with outbreaks in Thailand triggering the deaths of up to 90 percent of stocks. Infected fish often show loss of appetite, slow movements, dermal lesions and ulcers, ocular abnormalities, and opacity of lens,” the FAO reported. Tilapia is one of the world's most important fish for human consumption and is a mainstay of global food security and nutrition. BFAR-Davao data revealed that total production of Tilapia in Davao Region declined to 2,228.31 metric tons (MT), a bit decrease noted as compared to 2015's production at 2,588.68 MT. In 2016, bulk of the region's production is contributed by Davao del Sur with 1,567.02 MT, followed by Davao del Norte (294.87), Compostela Valley(247.86), Davao City(108.77) and Davao Oriental(9.79).

Read more: <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/davao/business/2017/06/12/threat-looms-over-tilapia-industry-546970>

Follow us: @sunstaronline on Twitter | SunStar Philippines on Facebook