

Fee fishing as a method of small scale fish marketing

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Fee Fishing - Rule # 1

- You are selling an entertainment experience!



Who is catching who? - Rule #2

- You want to catch customers with fish!



Other goods sold determines profit

– Rule # 3

- Bait
- Food
- Drinks
- Tackle
- Games
- Clothing
- Crafts



Other services sold determines profit – Rule # 4

- Fishing gear rental
- Rides, games and alternative activities
- Bonus ponds
- Restaurant
- Trophy fish catch and release
- Bed and Breakfast
- Fish cleaning



Fish sales often create little or no profit! – Rule #5

- ❑ Except in large volume operations!
- ❑ Small operations often hope to break even on the sale of fish
- ❑ Fish losses due to mortality, hook loss and non-biting fish may be significant



Is there a market?

- Other operations?
- Location?
- Other competing fishing opportunities?
- Reliable and affordable source of fish?
- Adequate population?
- Tourism?
- Seasonality?



In temperate climates:
Fee fishing markets are seasonal
(March – September)

Who should do this?

- Be a people person!!!
- Be patient!!
- Women are good at this!
- Season: 5-8 months
- Willing to work weekends and long hours during fishing season
- Run a clean and well maintained facility
- Part time or supplemental income
- Family run operations
- Be a good manager

What do you need?

- Ponds you can seine and manage are best
- Easy access to pond sites
- Good parking area
- Concession stand or building
- License or permit?
- A few small ponds – 1/3 to 1 acre



Fee fishing customers expect to catch fish!



Fish Species?

- What is reliably available?
- Affordable fish?
- Trout (stock year round?)
- Hybrid striped bass
- Hybrid bluegill
- Carp
- Catfish



Fee Fishing – Make it legal!!!

- Check with state game department for regulations
- Fishing license required?
- Minimum stocking rates?
- Fish Species allowed?



Manage water quality

- Aeration
- Water quality testing
- Feeding ~ 0.5% of body weight daily
- Monitor fish disease problems



Kentucky fee fishing operations pay
\$.70 - \$1.35/lb for 1 to 2 lb catfish



Kentucky fishermen pay \$1.00 -
\$2.00 lb for catfish caught

or

Pay a general admission fee of
\$6.00 - \$10.00 with a 5 – 10 fish
limit

Remember! Fee fishing operations sell entertainment!

- Relatively inexpensive
- Greater potential for catching fish
- Customers can fish from the pond bank
- State fishing licenses may not be required
- Other entertainment opportunities and services may be available

Most important – Good Management!



Fee Fishing: Benefits to small scale aquaculture development

- Provides a seasonal retail outlet for fish
- May be located near, or integrated with fish farms
- May encourage local crop diversification
- Retain revenue in rural communities
- Assists the industry with public education

Fee fishing facilities

- Prefer large fish, but will accept some size variability
- May accept small lots of fish delivered more frequently
- Can pay higher prices than processors due to retail sales
- Demand excellent quality fish
- Seasonal market (March to September)

Location: Market outlets for live food fish

- Ethnic markets are generally concentrated in or near urban areas
- Most fee fishing markets are located in suburban or rural settings

Live haulers require

- Commitment from fish producers and buyers
- Organized and timely harvest and loading of fish
- Quality product – good health, flavor and proper size



The end...

