

Chemical Usage in Aquaculture: Implications for Residues in Market Products

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Introduction

The culture of finfishes and shellfishes now accounts for some 30 million tonnes of production worldwide. The widespread decline (through overfishing) of many species targeted in capture fisheries continues to drive expansion of the aquaculture industry.

Diseases occur in both natural and cultured animals and can be categorised broadly into two groups:

- 1) Infectious diseases where the causative agent is bacterial, viral or parasitic.
- 2) Non-infectious diseases caused by toxic substances, improper nutrition, poor water quality, physical damage or genetics.

Infectious diseases are a major concern in aquaculture both in terms of the potential negative impacts on production and the potential for disease impacts on wild populations. Outbreaks of disease are typically caused by widely distributed, opportunistic pathogens. In natural systems they have a low prevalence and low intensity of infection, but in finfish cultures or shellfish hatcheries where stresses lower resistance and stocking density facilitates transmission of disease, impacts of disease outbreaks can be severe.

Total prevention of disease in aquacultural systems is likely to be unattainable in practice even though pathogen free broodstock for *e.g.* shrimp aquaculture is available. Disease management, therefore, depends upon good culture practice in combination with chemotherapeutic agents. Some agents may be administered (often in feed) on a prophylactic basis, although in many countries, the US for example, this is forbidden. Parasiticides, anaesthetics, spawning hormones, oxidants, disinfectants and herbicides are all routinely used. In the case of antibiotics, the development of vaccines has led to a sharp reduction in use in many of the finfish cultures in Europe and North America.

Even though chemical usage is widespread in the aquaculture industry, and the generic chemicals in use are known, accurate statistics on usage are hard to come by. As pointed out in a recent comprehensive review of chemical use in the south-east Asian sector (Gräslund & Bengtsson, 2001), despite the importance of this industry, documentation of the quality and quantity of chemicals and biological products used is scarce. The import industry is a substantial one. Nearly 27,000 tonnes of prawns and shrimps with a value of around GBP 125 million were imported into the UK alone in 1997. While the microbiological quality of these is closely monitored, chemical residues have received little attention.

The issue of chemical residues present in seafood, particularly antibiotics, has been thrown into sharp relief by reports of residues of nitrofurans antibacterials being detected in shrimps imported into the EU from Vietnam and from Thailand. Nitrofurans antibacterials are veterinary drugs whose use in food producing animals and fish is banned in the EU because of health concerns, including a possible increase in cancer risk in humans. Chloramphenicol has been detected in shrimps imported from Myanmar, Burma. Chloramphenicol, a broad spectrum antibiotic which has latterly been associated with aplastic anaemia in humans, has been banned in the EU for use in food producing animals and fish. This is a drug of last resort in human medicine for *Salmonella typhimurium* infections. The EC has responded to these findings by imposing a requirement on member states to monitor imported shrimp from these areas for the specific residues. (Commission

Decisions: 2002/249/EC; 2002/250/EC; 2002/251/EC, CEC 2002a,b,c). At the same time, there are relatively few constraints on chemical usage in aquaculture and many antibiotics are widely available.

Results of current literature review

The identification of antibiotics in imported shrimp has led to extensive coverage of the issue in the international media and, as noted above, led to EC imposition of monitoring. In relation to coverage of this and related issues in the scientific literature, interrogation of the in-house Science Unit literature database and on-line British Library resources generated a general review (cited above) on classes and types of chemicals used in aquaculture. No quantitative data were included in this review (Gräslund & Bengtsson 2001).

Antibiotic residues have been detected in a small proportion (8-9%) of tiger prawns tested in the UK (Willis *et al.* 1999). Of 204 prawns tested in 1994, one contained detectable oxolinic acid (a quinolone antibacterial), one contained sulphonamides and 16 showed the presence of oxytetracycline. A more recent evaluation using 98 samples from 17 producers spread over 3 countries showed that of these, 23 showed antibiotic activity. 18 contained residues of the antibiotic trimethoprim and 3 of these also contained gentamicin. The agents responsible for the activity in the remaining seven samples were not identified. Chloramphenicol and oxytetracycline were not found. This issue was flagged by the authors as requiring ongoing surveillance.

Various other articles in the specialist journals have dealt with the issue of antibiotic resistance (*e.g.* Sorum 1999 & 2000) and the impact of vaccines on reducing drug use is acknowledged for the Scandinavian sector. An extensive descriptive literature exists on the various diseases which can impact diverse aquaculture operations while others focus on the treatment regimes derived for specific problems. While many these papers contain information of interest, they do not address the issue of residues of chemicals present in the marketed products

Some articles in the literature provide quantitative data on antibiotic usage in aquaculture. These have already been referred to in Johnston *et al.* (1998). Such data have primarily been derived from the Scandinavian and North American aquaculture sector. GESAMP (1997) also provide information on the broad classes of chemicals in use in aquaculture, but provide no quantitative data or information on usage patterns.

With respect to the implications of residues in marketed products, while many papers make generic reference to this as established fact and, therefore, of general concern, there are few data in the literature. Even more general searching of internet resources simply retrieved reporting of the chloramphenicol and nitrofurans issue, together with many resources documenting the identity of chemicals in use in the sector. Other resources detail products registered for use in various legislatures.

In relation to detection of bacteria/viruses in marketed product, little if any information exists, although antibiotic resistance in sediment bacteria impacted by aquaculture activities is now well documented. In addition, the focus of the little research carried out to date has been on antibiotic residues. No data were found on other chemicals such as

pesticides and antifoulants known to be used in the sector. Finally, no data were found on residues of synthetic chemicals such as dioxins and PCBs transferred via feedstuffs in use in aquaculture beyond information already reported in EC Reports (see: *e.g.* EC 2000), largely from regulatory surveillance programmes.

Overall, the coverage of this issue in the technical literature suggests that, while the potential for problems is high, it remains poorly researched. A similar conclusion was reached by Gräslund and Bengtsson (2001) in relation to shrimp aquaculture:-

“Theoretically, chemicals other than antibiotics that are added to the shrimp ponds, or by-products from the applied substances, that have a bioaccumulation potential, could be found as residues in the shrimps. ...However, little attention has been paid to the risk of residues other than antibiotics in farmed shrimps, and no data from such investigations have been found”.

Point of departure for further campaign discussion

Some detailed background on the various chemicals and groups of chemicals used in aquaculture, together with a broad outline of the environmental problems they can cause, is already provided in the 1998 Greenpeace Report on the World's Oceans (Johnston *et al.* 1998). Following on from the additional concerns raised above regarding residues carried over into seafood, this document outlines (in Table 1) those chemicals reportedly used in aquaculture (shrimp and finfish) world-wide which, by virtue of their intrinsic properties, may render them of concern with regard to consumer health.

This is not intended to provide an exhaustive review of their toxicologies, nor to attempt to establish relative levels of hazard; indeed, there is largely insufficient information on which to base such judgments. Rather, Table 1 provides a condensed overview of those chemical agents which may be of greatest concern on the basis of their toxicity and likelihood to persist and/or accumulate in biological tissues, as a starting point for identification of priorities for further research (including, as practicable and necessary, analytical determinations).

Table 1: Summary of chemicals used in the culture of finfish and/or shrimps which are, or may be, of concern with respect to residues in the final seafood product based on their intrinsic properties and/or reported detection of residues in foodstuffs.

Chemical	Trade names	Chemical type	Use Category	Hazards	References	Notes
Acriflavine neutral (mixture of 3,6-diamino-10-methylacridinium chloride and 3,6-diamino-acridine) CAS: 8048-52-0	Euflavine, Gonacrine, Neutroflavine, Trypaflavine		Antibacterial and external topical treatment for protozoan infection – used on fish eggs and fry	Irritant Inhibitor of DNA activity in human cell lines (has been used as anti-inflammatory drug)	GESAMP (1997) Choi <i>et al.</i> (2000) [MSDS available at http://www.koivet.com/acriflavine_msd.html]	Acroflavine hydrochloride (CAS 8063-24-9) is a suspected teratogen, but appears to be used less frequently
Amoxicillin (Amoxicillin) CAS: 61336-70-7		β -lactam antibiotic	Antibacterial administered in feed or, more rarely, by direct injection	Exposure of consumers sensitive to β -lactam (penicillin-type) antibiotics Development of resistant strains	GESAMP (1997)	
Azamethiphos CAS: 35575-96-3	Salmosan 50% plus several others	Organophosphate	Treatment against preadult and adult sealice in European and North American salmon culture	Acetylcholine esterase inhibition	Pretti <i>et al.</i> (2002)	
Azinphos ethyl CAS: 2642-71-9	Gusathion A	Organophosphate	Previously used to remove molluscs from shrimp ponds in Philippines, but now banned. Use in other countries not documented	Acetylcholine esterase inhibition	Budavari (1996), Graslund & Bengtsson (2001)	
Benzocaine (ethyl <i>para</i> -amino-benzoate) CAS: 94-09-7	Anesthone, Orthesin, Cepacaine plus many others	Aminobenzoate	Anaesthetic used during egg and milt-stripping and as preparation for transport	Harmful if swallowed Residues can be detected in fish tissue, though more rapidly cleared than other anaesthetics	GESAMP (1997), Meinertz <i>et al.</i> (1999)	Developed in response to concerns about tricaine methane-sulphonate (Meinertz <i>et al.</i> 1999)
Carbaryl	Sevin	Organophosphate/Car	Control of burrowing	Teratogen	GESAMP (1997),	

CAS: 63-25-2		bamate	shrimp in shrimp ponds in Central and S. America, and in bottom oyster culture in NW USA	Acetylcholine esterase inhibition	Dumbauld <i>et al.</i> (2001)	
n-Chloro- <i>p</i> -toluene sulfonamide, sodium salt CAS: 127-65-1	Chloramine-T	Chlorinated sulphonamide	Treatment of bacterial gill disease and protozoan ectoparasites in salmonids Disinfectant used for tank and equipment cleaning	Harmful by ingestion Active ingredient is 20% available chlorine – no information on residues	[MSDS available at http://www.cris.com/~hschem/msdscht.html]	
Chloramphenicol CAS: 56-75-7		“Phenicol” antibiotic	Broad spectrum antibiotic	Aplastic anaemia Resistant strains develop readily	Primavera <i>et al.</i> (1993), Budavari (1996), GESAMP (1997) Graslund & Bengtsson (2001)	
Chlorpyrifos CAS: 2921-88-2	Dursban plus many others	Organophosphate	Control of ectoparasites in freshwater fish and of monogenetic trematode infections in shrimp hatcheries	Acetylcholine esterase inhibition Neurotoxicity greater in juvenile animals	GESAMP (1997), Chanda <i>et al.</i> (2002)	
Cotrimoxazole (Sulfamethox-azole) CAS: 723-46-6		Sulphonamide antibiotic	General antibacterial	Toxic epidermal necrolysis in sensitive individuals	GESAMP (1997), Nassif <i>et al.</i> (2002)	
Cypermethrin CAS: 52315-07-8	EXCIS plus many others	Synthetic pyrethroid	Net pen treatment of sea lice on salmonids in USA, UK, Norway, Faroes and Ireland	Neurotoxicity, possibly enhanced by co-presence of organophosphates	Roth (2000), Ernst <i>et al.</i> (2001), Haya <i>et al.</i> (2001)	Weakly antioestrogenic and antiandrogenic May degrade to produce oestrogenic residues (Tyler <i>et al.</i> , 2000)
Deltamethrin CAS: 52918-63-5	Alpha Max plus many others	Synthetic pyrethroid	Net pen treatment of sea lice on salmonids in Norway	Neurotoxicity	Roth (2000)	

Diazinon CAS: 333-41-5	Dimpylat	Organophosphate	Removal of mysids from shrimp ponds in Indonesia	Acetylcholine esterase inhibition	GESAMP (1997), Graslund & Bengtsson (2001)	
Dichlorvos CAS: 62-73-7	DDVP, Nuvan	Organophosphate	Widely used to control crustacean ectoparasites (seallice) in fish, especially salmonids in NW Europe and Chile – discontinued in Norway and Faroes in 1998	Acetylcholine esterase inhibition	Budavari (1996), GESAMP (1997), Roth (2000), Graslund & Bengtsson (2001)	Di-n-butyl phthalate may be used as carrier (Burrige and Haya 1995). Some preparations may contain epichlorohydrin as a stabiliser (GESAMP 1997)
Diflubenzuron CAS: 35367-38-5	Dimilin, Difluron plus many others	Difluorobenzoyl urea insect growth regulator	Control of sealice in finfish culture in Norway and Chile	Cytotoxicity in human and rat cell lines	De Sousa <i>et al.</i> (1997), Roth (2000)	
Diquat bromide (1,1-ethylene-2,2'-bipyridinium dibromide) CAS: 85-00-7	Aquacide plus many others		No specific information	Possible reproductive toxicant and effects on kidneys in humans Highly toxic by skin contact	Goldburg <i>et al.</i> (2001) [MSDS available at http://www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/rtkweb/0808.pdf]	
Dimethyl-5-nitroimidazole CAS: 551-92-8	Dimatridazole	Imidazole	Used against protozoan infections, though mainly for the aquarium trade	No information	GESAMP (1997)	
Doramectin CAS: 117704-25-3		Avermectin	Broad spectrum endo- and ectoparasiticide, listed as used in Chile	Reproductive toxin in rabbits Relatively persistent as parent compound in liver	Baynes <i>et al.</i> (1999), Roth (2000)	
Emamectin benzoate CAS: 137512-74-4	Emamectin, MK-0244	Avermectin	Used against ectoparasites on salmonids in Norway, UK, Canada and Chile	Possible neurotoxicity in mammals, though not in birds	O'Grodnick <i>et al.</i> (1998), Roth (2000), Duston and Cusack (2002)	
Endosulfan (Thiosulfan)	Thiodan	Organochlorine	Used in shrimp farming in Thailand	Possible reproductive and immunotoxicant	Banerjee and Hussain (1986), ATSDR	Banned in numerous countries, and

CAS: 115-29-7			(precise use not listed)	in humans Suspected endocrine disruptor	(1993), Vonier <i>et al.</i> (1996), Graslund and Bengtsson (2001)	variously classified as “toxic” and “hazardous”. Breakdown product, endosulfan sulphate, is more persistent and exhibits similar toxic traits
Enrofloxacin CAS: 93106-60-6		Fluoroquinolone antibiotic	Broad spectrum antibacterial	Causes retinal degeneration in cats Potentially highly persistent	GESAMP (1997), Graslund and Bengtsson (2001)	
Erythromycin CAS: 114-07-8		Macrolide antibiotic	Used against bacterial kidney disease and streptococcosis in yellowtail in Japan and in SE Asia shrimp hatcheries	Development of resistant strains	Primavera <i>et al.</i> (1993), GESAMP (1997), Graslund and Bengtsson (2001)	
Ethoxyquin CAS: 91-53-2		Organonitrogen antioxidant	Commonly used in feed preservation	Harmful by ingestion Irritant	GESAMP (1997) [MSDS available at http://ntp-server.niehs.nih.gov/htdocs/CHEM_H&S/NTP_Chem9/Radian91-53-2.html]	
Furazolidone CAS: 67-45-8		Nitrofurantoin antibiotic	Broad spectrum antibacterial and antiprotozoal activity	Possible human carcinogen Has been used as drug for AIDS patients	GESAMP (1997), Graslund and Bengtsson (2001)	Use for food animals prohibited within EU
Ivermectin CAS: 70288-86-7	Ivomec	Avermectin	Used against crustacean (sealice) and nematode infestations in salmonids, including in UK, Ireland,	Neurotoxic in mammals “Safe” residue levels in low ppb range for meat products	Baynes <i>et al.</i> (1999), Grant and Briggs (1998), Roth (2000)	

			Canada and Chile			
Malachite green oxalate CAS: 569-64-2	Malachite green Basic Green 4 Diamond Green	Organonitrogen compound	Antifungal and antiprotozoal bath treatment, primarily in shrimp hatcheries	Respiratory poison Persistent residues in tissues of seafood	Primavera <i>et al.</i> (1993), Dierberg and Kiattisimkul (1996), GESAMP (1997), Graslund and Bengtsson (2001)	Prohibited for use in USA, EU and in Thailand
Methylene blue CAS: 61-73-4			Used as antifungal and antiprotozoal treatment, though less frequently than malachite green	Can produce haemolytic anaemia in laboratory animals	GESAMP (1997), Hejtmancik <i>et al.</i> (2002)	
Malathion CAS: 121-75-5		Organophosphate	Control of ectoparasitic crustaceans (sealice) and trematode infections in shrimp hatcheries	Acetylcholine esterase inhibition	Budavari (1996), GESAMP (1997), Graslund and Bengtsson (2001)	
Metronidazole CAS: 443-48-1		Imidazole	Used against protozoan infections, though mainly for the aquarium trade	Reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen	GESAMP (1997) NTP (2001)	
6-[2-(5-nitrofuranyl)ethenyl]-2-pyridinemethanol CAS: 13411-16-0	Nifurpirinol	Nitrofurans	Broad spectrum and potent antibacterial and antiprotozoal agent	Suspected human carcinogen	GESAMP (1997), Graslund and Bengtsson (2001)	In 1990, one of the most common therapeutic agents used in shrimp hatcheries in the Philippines (Baticados <i>et al.</i> 1990)
Norfloxacin CAS: 70458-96-7	Noroxin	Organonitrogen compound	Antibiotic	Used as human drug, but only for severe infections (and never for children or pregnant women)	Budavari (1996), GESAMP (1997)	
5-(4,5-dimethoxy-2-	Ormetoprim - one	Diaminopyrimidine	Applied in feed to	No information on	GESAMP (1997),	Cooking does reduce

methyl-benzyl)-2,4-diaminopyrimidine CAS: 6981-18-6	component of ROMET-30	antibiotic	treat furunculosis, enteric red mouth disease and vibriosis	toxicity		tissue residues in fish (Xu <i>et al.</i> 1996)
Oxolinic acid CAS: 14698-29-4	Gramurin, Dioxacin plus others	4-quinolone antibiotic	Used against gram-negative bacteria	Development of resistant strains Residues resistant to degradation	GESAMP (1997)	
Oxytetracycline CAS: 79-57-2	Terramycin, plus many others	Tetracycline antibiotic	Probably the most widely used antibacterial agent in shrimp aquaculture, especially in SE Asia	Development of strains resistant to oxytetracycline and other related antibiotics	Baticados <i>et al.</i> (1990), Primavera <i>et al.</i> (1993), GESAMP (1997), Graslund and Bengtsson (2001)	
Polyvinyl pyrrolidone iodine complex CAS: 25655-41-8	Povidone iodine	Iodophore	Antibacterial and antiviral agent, used to treat fish eggs		Budavari (1996), GESAMP (1997)	
Rifampicin CAS: 13292-46-1	Rifampin plus many others		Antibacterial, effective against mycobacterial infections	Rapid development of resistant strains	Primavera <i>et al.</i> (1993), Graslund and Bengtsson (2001)	Rifampicin resistance very common in fish and prawn from South India (Vivekanandhan <i>et al.</i> 2002)
Romet 30	See Ormetoprim and Sulfadiazine					
Simazine CAS: 122-34-9	Simadex, Aquazine plus many others	Triazine herbicide	No specific information	Toxic by ingestion Effects on liver and thyroid in humans Potential reproductive toxin	Goldburg <i>et al.</i> (2001)	
Sulfadiazine CAS: 68-35-9	One component of ROMET-30	Sulphonamide antibiotic	Commonly used in combination with diamino-pyrimidine to yield broad spectrum antibacterial action	Development of resistant strains	Budavari (1996), GESAMP (1997)	Cooking does reduce tissue residues in fish (Xu <i>et al.</i> 1996)
Sulfadimethoxine (6-Sulfanilamido-2,4-dimethoxy-	Dinosol	Sulfonamide antibiotic	No specific information	No information available	[MSDS available at http://www.vedco.com/VedcoCatalog.htm	Residues detectable in fish tissues

pyrimidine) CAS: 122-11-2					1]	
Teflubenzuron (N-(((3,5-dichloro-2,4-difluorophenyl)amino)carbonyl)-2,6-difluoro-benzamide) CAS: 83121-18-0	Nomolt, Dart, Diaract, Tefluron	Benzoyl phenyl-urea insect growth regulator	Control of sealice in finfish culture in Norway, Canada and Chile	No information available	Roth (2000)	Residues detectable in vegetables and fruits following agricultural use
Tricaine methane-sulphonate (Ethyl 3-aminobenzoate, methanesulfonic acid salt) CAS: 886-86-2	Metacaine, Finquel, MS-222		Anaesthetic	Persistent residues in fish tissues	Meinertz <i>et al.</i> (1999)	
Trichlorfon CAS: 52-68-6	Dipterex, Neguvon	Organophosphate	Used against monogenean ectoparasites in Mediterranean seabass and sea bream, though also has application in shrimp culture in SE Asia	Acetylcholine esterase inhibition Hydrolyses to form more toxic and persistent dichlorvos	Budavari (1996), GESAMP (1997), Graslund and Bengtsson (2001)	
Trifluralin CAS: 1582-09-8	Treflan	Organonitrogen compound	Fungicide used in bath treatments in shrimp aquaculture	Possible human carcinogen Induces thyroid and liver tumours in mammals	Budavari (1996), GESAMP (1997), Hurley <i>et al.</i> (1998), Gunier <i>et al.</i> (2001)	
Trimetoprim (trimethoprim) CAS: 738-70-5	Proloprim, Trimpex plus many others			Potential development of antibiotic resistance Residues detected in cooked prawns imported to UK from Malaysia and Thailand	Willis <i>et al.</i> (1999), Graslund and Bengtsson (2001) [MSDS available at http://ntp-server.niehs.nih.gov/htdocs/CHEM_H&S/NTP_Chem7/Radian	

					738-70-5.html]	
Triphenyl tin acetate CAS: 900-95-8	Fentin acetate, Brestan	Organotin compound	Previously used as antifoulant on fish cages and to remove molluscs from shrimp ponds in SE Asia	Immunotoxicity in mammals Possible neurotoxicity Residues accumulate in fish cultured in treated ponds and persist for many months	Budavari (1996), GESAMP (1997)	Use banned in USA and Europe, as well as in Philippines and Indonesia
Triphenyl tin chloride CAS: 639-58-7	Fentin chloride, Aquatin	Organotin compound	Previously used as antifoulant on fish cages and to remove molluscs from shrimp ponds in SE Asia	Immunotoxicity in mammals Possible neurotoxicity	Budavari (1996), GESAMP (1997)	Use banned in USA and Europe, as well as in Philippines and Indonesia

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