A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE COMPETITIVENESS OF TILAPIA AND CATFISH ENTERPRISES IN MBALE SUB REGION EASTERN UGANDA

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ABSTRACT

Uganda's capture fisheries are dwindling in supplies. With a population growth rate of 3.2%, an expected annual consumption of 580,234 tonnes with supplies limited to only 330,000 tonnes, creates a consumption gap of above 240,000 tonnes per annum. As such there is need to boost aquaculture supply sources to bridge the gap. The government of Uganda has indicated that no sufficient fish farming research has been done to guide in planning for this sector. Therefore a study on fish farming in Mbale sub-region (Sironko, Mbale and Manafwa districts out of the 5 districts) was carried out with the main aim of establishing the economics of fish (tilapia and catfish) farming. From the fish farmer lists established per district, 40 farmers were selected randomly. In total, 120 households were visited and interviewed. Descriptive statistics, unit cost ratio and simple multiple regression analysis were done to answer the main objective. The results showed that Catfish enterprise had high yields (752,013.00kg/ha/year) but with low price (3045.83Ush/kg) as compared to the tilapia fish enterprise which realised lower yields (2856.15kg/ha/year) but was more expensively sold (4004.16Ush/kg). Catfish competitiveness (UCR=0.89) was higher than tilapia (UCR=0.94) but not significantly different. These values which are nearer 1 indicate less competiveness/profitability than when these figures would be smaller and nearer the 0 value. The regression analysis revealed a number of factors that were significant and positively influencing the competitiveness of both tilapia and catfish as years of experience, level of education, number of extension visits, pond size and membership to farmer groups. Type of feed was only significant for catfish farming. Distance to fresh fish market negatively and significantly affected both tilapia and catfish competitiveness. It thus negatively affected profitability of fish farming. Provision of better performing fish breeds, increased extension service delivery, easy access to quality feed, improved access to markets, farmers'

operation as farmer groups could increase fish farming competitiveness as an enterprise in Sironko, Mbale and Manafwa districts.