



MEDIA RELEASE

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Audit of Queensland prawn farms targets biosecurity threats

Biosecurity across Northern Australia's prawn aquaculture industry will be under the microscope in the latest Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia (CRCNA) project announced today.

Researchers from James Cook University (JCU) and industry partner the Australian Prawn Farmers' Association (APFA) will conduct one of the most comprehensive audits of prawn aquaculture pathogens ever undertaken.

The industry-led project will run over a two-year period, with the CRCNA contributing \$340,000 in funding. The total project value is \$759,831.

Tony Charles from the APFA said biosecurity is a leading focus of the APFA and broader industry.

"The research will allow industry to gain detailed knowledge of the pathogens that are currently affecting production and potentially identify previously unknown and emerging threats."

JCU's Professor Dean Jerry said the latest molecular tests and technologies will be used to detect and identify specific endemic or emerging pathogens from farms at Mossman in Far North Queensland, to Logan in the State's South East.

"Gathering data from different farms will, for the first time, provide an important industry benchmark of pathogens which can potentially impact prawn aquaculture," he said.

"This data will provide critical insights on threats to production from pathogens and inform the tools required to help better manage potential pathogen threats."

"It is possible new pathogens that have gone under the radar will also be found," he said.

Mr Charles said the work will be crucial in strengthening the industry's resolve and help towards implementing proactive biosecurity measures.

It is expected the project will decrease production losses caused by pathogens from 20-30 per cent to 10-20 per cent annually and increase production by around \$16 million a year.

CRCNA Chief Executive Office Jed Matz said the broad reach of the research is why the project had the support of the CRCNA.

"This project has the potential to provide long-term benefits for the Australian prawn aquaculture industry, by increasing biosecurity awareness and enhancing the capacity to monitor pathogens."

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The CRCNA supports industry-led collaborations between industry, researchers and the community and thanks our industry partners and project participants.



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