

INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION

OF VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS DEVELOPED BY NIFPHATT

FROM SEA FARMED COBIA (RGCA – MPEDA)

(*Rachycentron canadum*)

It has become an accepted fact that natural marine resources are rapidly declining with the increase in fishing efforts, improvement in fishing technology and due to several other factors like marine pollution, effect of climate change, global warming etc.

In order to reduce the pressure on the depleting natural fish stock and also to meet the ever increasing demand for fish, stock enhancement programmes like sea farming or sea ranching are taken up worldwide.

Selection criteria of a fish to be considered for sea farming/sea ranching are its high value /demand as a table fish all over the world, fast growing nature, high feed conversion ability, hatchery breeding techniques for the supply of juveniles etc.

Cobia (locally known as *motha* or *kadal bral*) conforms to the above criteria very well. They do not move around in shoals, hence may not be caught in large numbers. Whatever caught by local fishing vessels are usually sold to up-market restaurants or to high end consumers, at a premium price. It is also known for its firm, white and tasty flesh, making it a preferred choice for the *sashimi* –a high value Japanese sea food delicacy served raw in thin slices.

All the above have prompted the **RGCA** (Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Aquaculture) - the research and development wing of the **MPEDA** (Marine Products Export Development Authority) to take up the sea cage farming of cobia at Muttom in south Tamil Nadu. Sea farming being a cost intensive aquaculture activity, the produce needs to fetch high value in the market. MPEDA has already identified resource persons and necessary technology for the export of farmed cobia especially to the *Sashimi* market.

Any industry focussed on export market alone, is subjected to vagaries of international trade pressures. Hence for the sustainability of such industries, there should be a strong domestic market support, to act as a cushion or buffer to take up the setbacks from International trade. Though the cobia as such has good demand in the local market, this may not be sufficient to support the high cost of sea farming activities. In order to fetch maximum returns to the farmer, high value products need to be developed and marketed.

NIFPHATT's efforts are in the direction of developing value added products from sea farmed cobia mainly for the domestic front.

NIFPHATT (National Institute of Fisheries Post Harvest Technology and Training) is a subordinate office of the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. Accordingly in conformation to its mandate NIFPHATT has developed several ready to cook, ready to serve, heat & eat products from sea farmed cobia supplied by MPEDA. These include frozen, battered & breaded, canned, smoked marinated & pickled and other value added products. Some of which are mentioned below. Once such fishes are supplied in sufficient quantities, NIFPHATT can also take up test marketing of the above products.

1. Ready to cook products

- IQF Cobia fillet-skin on
- IQF Cobia fillet-skinless
- IQF Cobia steak-skin on
- IQF Cobia steak-skinless
- IQF Cobia head steak
- IQF Cobia central portion

2. Battered and Breaded Products

- IQF Cobia cutlet
- IQF Cobia fingers

3. Ready to serve products

- Frozen Cobia curry

4. Canned Cobia products

- Cobia in curry
- Cobia curry in retortable pouch
- Smoked Cobia fillet in oil

5. Smoked Cobia products

- Smoked Cobia fillet
- Smoked Cobia fillet in oil

6. Other value added products and by-products

- Fish roll from Cobia
- Marinated & pickled product from trimmed meat
- Skewered Cobia cubes
- Dried cobia skin
- Fish silage