

Mekong Fishery Leads Laos' Emergence in Global Pangasius Trade with Integrated Aquaculture Efforts

PAKSE, CHAMPASAK, LAOS, September 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Along the lower Mekong River in Laos, a new chapter is unfolding in the pangasius industry, traditionally led by Vietnam. In Champasak Province, [MeKong Fishery](#) is spearheading an ambitious aquaculture initiative that leverages the region's natural resources and modern techniques. This project highlights Laos' growing role in diversifying global supply chains for pangasius, a mild-flavored white-fleshed fish valued for its nutritional benefits and versatility in international markets.

A Shifting Global Market

The pangasius industry remains strong, with global output predict reaching about 4 million tons in 2025. Demand continues to grow worldwide, with rising exports to markets such as China, the U.S., and the Middle East. Prices have also trended upward, reflecting both steady consumption and tighter supply. Overall, the sector shows robust momentum and expanding international opportunities.

Laos' Entry via MeKong Fishery

MeKong Fishery's operations in Laos capitalize on the area's abundant clean water and tropical monsoon climate, averaging 26°C annually. The site's water quality earns a top rating from the



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United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, supporting sustainable practices with minimal pollution. The project establishes a full industry chain, from seed production to sales, integrating broodstock preservation, genetic breeding, ecological farming, feed manufacturing, processing, research, and distribution. This approach aims to deliver traceable, high-quality pangasius meeting international safety standards.

A focus on genetic resources underscores the initiative, with efforts centered on germplasm conservation and new variety improvement. The Laos Pangasius Genetic Breeding Center, backed by academic collaborations, employs molecular selection breeding to develop all-male monosex strains. These varieties offer advantages in growth rates, disease resistance, immune ecology, higher fillet yields, and nutritional profiles like elevated protein and reduced fat.

Milestones include completing Laos pangasius germplasm protection and breeding preservation, full genome sequencing in 2018–2019, and the world's first chromosome-level genome map in 2021. Precision feeding programs, tailored to growth stages, optimize nutrition for better feed conversion and fillet quality.

Current Progress and Future Plan

The park has already entered operation, with initial construction completed and approximately USD 40 million invested in infrastructure. The processing facility, operational since December 2024, complies with GMP standards and is equipped with low-temperature bleeding machines, skinning lines, tunnel freezers, metal detectors, and automated packaging systems. It ensures full traceability and safety monitoring, holding GAP, ASC, and HACCP certifications. The plant has also completed U.S. FDA registration and is listed in China's export directory, granting access to major international markets.

Located along National Highway 13 and with future links to the China–Laos railway, the site enjoys cost advantages of 10%–20% lower in land, feed, energy, and labor compared to Vietnam. The Belt and Road Initiative further enhances logistics and port connectivity.

The long-term master plan covers a total of 2,863 hectares with an overall investment of USD 400 million, including USD 160–200 million in infrastructure. Building on the existing foundation,



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the project will expand its research center, farming zones, aquatic product processing facilities, feed production plants, and tailwater treatment systems. Once fully completed, the park will achieve an annual processing capacity of over 1.1 million tons, accounting for roughly 27.5% of current global supply.

Government Support

The government has strongly supported the project. In 2024, senior officials from Laos' Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry led a delegation with Mekong Fishery to the Shenzhen International Fisheries Expo, showcasing pangasius as a national representative product. The Lao government views fisheries as a key driver of rural growth and exports, backing the sector with policies and industrialization measures. Recently, China's Customs registered Mekong Fresh Food Co., Ltd. as the first Lao company approved to export aquatic products to China, marking the project as a model of China-Laos cooperation and part of Laos' agricultural export strategy.

In April 2025, under the continued advancement of the Belt and Road Initiative, Shenzhen—known for its pioneering spirit and special drive—achieved a major breakthrough in China-Laos aquatic trade. The first shipment of high-quality pangasius, farmed, processed, and produced in Laos, successfully arrived at Shenzhen's Shekou Port. This milestone not only marked the first time that the China-Laos aquatic trade corridor was fully opened, but also the very first entry of Lao aquatic products directly into the Chinese market.

Looking Ahead

With technological and cost advantages, Laos could surpass Vietnam within five years to become the world's largest single pangasius chain base, reshaping industry patterns and exerting significant influence on global markets.

Challenges persist, such as disease management, price volatility, and environmental stewardship. Ongoing breeding and feed innovations, plus market diversification beyond China and the U.S., will be essential. MeKong Fishery's integrated model—from genetics to packaging—promises resilience amid supply disruptions.

As aquaculture evolves, Laos' lower Mekong efforts illustrate how emerging areas can complement established producers, offering sustainable, affordable fish to global consumers. This development not only boosts local economies but also enriches the worldwide pangasius landscape.

For more information, please visit the website:

<http://cn.mekongfishery.com/About.html#nofollow>

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