Pacific White Shrimp, *Litopenaeus vannamei*, Hatchery Industry in China

by

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Pacific white shrimp *L. vannamei*
A brief history of *L. vannamei* in China

**1988**
- *L. vannamei* was first introduced into China by Professor Zhang Weiquan of the Institute of Oceanology of Chinese Academy of Sciences from University of Texas Port Aransas Marine Science Laboratory. The postlarvae were provided by Texas A&M University. Nineteen postlarvae survived upon arriving in China.

**1989**
- First succeeded in maturation and spawning in captivity (up to zoea stage)

**1992**
- Succeeded in the production of postlarvae

**1994**
- Succeeded in the mass production of postlarvae

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A brief history of *L. vannamei* in China (cont.)

**1994 – 1999**
- Small scale growout production

**1999**
- Real start and acceptance of *L. vannamei* farming after the collapse of *Penaeus monodon* farming (mainly due to the epidemic white spot virus disease)

**2001**
- Farming area for *L. vannamei* started to expand quickly.

**2007**
- Annual production of shrimp reached a record-high of 1.28 million metric tons among which the majority were *L. vannamei*. 
**L. vannamei** hatchery industry in China: diversification

**Broodstock from Hawaii, Florida, Singapore “1st generation”**

Nauplii producers

Local broodstock “2nd generation”

PL producers

Nursing or acclimation farms

Growout farms

PL\textsubscript{12-15} • PL\textsubscript{5-6}

PL\textsubscript{12-15} • PL\textsubscript{12-15}

“1st generation” origin

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**L. vannamei** hatcheries in China

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**Estimated number of hatcheries in China**

Between 2,600 and 2,700 established and 1,500 to 1,600 in production and at least 90% of them are situated in the provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi, Fujian and Hainan.

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**Sizes of hatcheries**

From 500 m\textsuperscript{3} to 2,000 m\textsuperscript{3} larvae-rearing area per hatchery and production from 50 millions to 500 millions of postlarvae each year per hatchery.

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**Estimated total requirement of postlarvae**

Between 300 billions and 400 billions each year to satisfy the growout production of 800,000 to 1 million metric tons of shrimp.
Major *L. vannamei* PL producing areas in China

Wenchang and Qionghai, the major *L. vannamei* PL producing areas in Hainan
Fangcheng, Beihai and Dongxing, the major *L. vannamei* PL producing areas in Guangxi

Longhai, Zhangpu, Xiaman and Xiapu, the major *L. vannamei* PL producing areas in Fujian
Zhanjiang (Donghai Island), the major *L. vannamei* PL producing area in Guangdong

Shrimp hatcheries one after another along the road in “Hatchery Valley” of Wenchang, Hainan
Shrimp hatcheries one after another along the road in “Hatchery Valley” of Wenchang, Hainan.

*L. vannamei* hatcheries: water treatment

**Filtration**
- Sand filter (most commonly used)
- Cartridge filter
- Bag filter (most commonly used)

**Removal of organic matters**
- Foam fractionator (protein skimmer)
- Activated carbon filter (most commonly used)

**Sterilization**
- Ozonation
- UV sterilization
- Chlorination (most commonly used)
- Formalin (becoming popular)
L. vannamei hatcheries: water treatment

**Adjustment of alkalinity**
It is a common practice to bring up the alkalinity of seawater to a minimum of 130 ppm. The effect on the survival is significant.

**Application of EDTA**
Constant application of EDTA at 10 - 20 ppm is generally required. Heavy metals often exist in the seawater source.

The water treatment system in Evergreen’s shrimp hatchery (Sand filters, protein skimmers and ozonators)
**L. vannamei** hatcheries: broodstock

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of broodstock</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Imported, so-called “1st generation” SPF broodstock</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Locally-raised, so-called “2nd generation” broodstock</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of broodstock</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males: &gt; 40 g each</td>
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<td>Females: &gt; 45 g each</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of broodstock</th>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; 8 months and &lt; 12 months</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost of broodstock</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Imported: &gt;US$ 40 each male or female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Locally-raised: US$ 2 - 3 each male or female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**L. vannamei** hatcheries: broodstock

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Density of broodstock</th>
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<tr>
<td>10 – 15 shrimp/m², males and females separated</td>
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<tr>
<th>Induced maturation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Unilaterally eyestalk ablation on female</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Highly nutritive feed, mainly squid, polychaete worms, oyster and calf liver (formulated feeds, not popular)</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reproductive performance of broodstock</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectation: 200,000 to 300,000 nauplii per spawn and a minimum of 14 spawns within 5 months after eyestalk ablation, totaling a minimum of 3 millions of nauplii per mother shrimp (imported broodstock)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### L. vannamei hatcheries: nauplii to postlarvae

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Capacity of larvae-rearing tank</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 - 20 m³ per tank</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Initial density of nauplii**

150 – 200 per liter of water

**Survival rates**

- Naupliar stage: 0 – 90%
- Zoea stage: 0 – 70% (most critical stage)
- Mysis stage: 50 – 90%
- PL stage: 80 – 90%
- Overall from nauplii to PL₁₂ -₁₅: 0 - 50%

**Production of PL**

Up to 100,000 PL₁₂ -₁₅ per m³ of water

### Feeding

**Zoea stage:**
- Live algae (mainly *Skeletonema sp.* and *Chaetoceros sp.*)
- Algal powder
- Formulated feed (in microencapsulated, flake or microbound form)
- Newly-hatched Artemia nauplii (cold or heat-shocked, starting from Zoea II or Zoea III stage)

**Mysis stage:**
- Formulated feed
- Live newly-hatched Artemia nauplii

**PL stage:**
- Formulated feed
- Live newly-hatched Artemia nauplii
**L. vannamei** hatcheries: quality assurance of PL

Before harvesting PL, the following steps are taken to ensure quality of PL:
1. PCR check for viral infection
2. Microscopic observation on abnormality
3. Stress test (salinity shock)

   - 100 postlarvae from PL tank
   - 0 ppt salinity water (same water temp.)
   - 15 min.

   Normal seawater and observe survival rate:
   - above 98% - healthy
   - above 85% - accept
   - below 85% - reject

* Postlarvae have to be PL10 or older for 0 ppt salinity shock test.

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**L. vannamei** hatcheries: costs of larva-rearing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nauplii (1st generation)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Selling price: RMB 10 – 15 (US$1.5 – 2.2) per 10,000 nauplii</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Cost per 10,000 PL12 - 15 based on 30% survival: RMB 33 – 50 (US$ 4.8 – 7.3)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeding cost</th>
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<tr>
<td>RMB 27 - 30 (US$ 4.0 – 4.4) per 10,000 PL12 - 15</td>
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<tr>
<th>Other cost</th>
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<tr>
<td>RMB 20 - 25 (US$ 2.9 – 3.7) per 10,000 PL12 - 15</td>
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<th>Total cost</th>
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<tr>
<td>RMB 80 - 100 (US$ 11.7 – 14.6) per 10,000 PL12 - 15</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selling price</th>
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<tr>
<td>RMB 120 - 160 (US$ 17.6 – 23.4) per 10,000 PL12 - 15</td>
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* Note: One US dollar is equivalent to RMB 6.83
**L. vannamei** hatcheries: costs of larvae-rearing

**Nauplii (2nd generation)**
- Selling price: RMB 1 - 2 (US$ 0.15 – 0.30) per 10,000 nauplii
- Cost per 10,000 PL12 - 15 based on 30% survival: RMB 3.3 – 6.7 (US$ 0.48 – 0.98)

**Feeding cost**
- RMB 17 - 20 (US$ 2.49 – 2.93) per 10,000 PL12 - 15

**Other cost**
- RMB 10 - 15 (US$ 1.46 – 2.20) per 10,000 PL12 - 15

**Total cost**
- RMB 30 - 40 (US$ 4.39 – 5.86) per 10,000 PL12 - 15

**Selling price**
- RMB 60 - 90 (US$ 8.78 – 11.71) per 10,000 PL12 - 15

*Note: One US dollar is equivalent to RMB 6.83*

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**L. vannamei** hatchery industry in China: constraints, problems, and perspectives

**Constraints**

1. **Inadequate supply of quality SPF broodstock**
   While the demand for “1st generation” PL is on the rise, some imported broodstocks perform poorly (low maturity rate, low fertilization rate, poor quality nauplii). Quality SPF broodstocks are in short supply and expensive.

2. **Inferior quality of locally-raised broodstocks**
   Locally-raised broodstocks are not properly selected. The reproductive performance is poor and the growth of the offspring is slow with much size variation.
Problems

1. Zoea II syndrome often occurs, resulting in low survival.

2. Unknown causes of empty gut during mysis stage.

3. The use of formalin in water treatment, which has become popular, may impose some side effects on shrimp health and possibly cause environmental hazards.

4. The use of antibiotics still exists, though the incidents have been greatly reduced.

5. The use of probiotics, prebiotics, and immunoenhancers becomes popular. However, the effect is inconsistent. The commercially available health products are unreliable in qualities.

6. The overall survival rate from nauplii to PL is too low (< 25%). The technique of larvae-rearing needs to be further improved.

7. The contamination of pathogens especially protozoan parasites in mass culture of algae.
L. vannamei hatchery industry in China: constraints, problems, and perspectives

**Problems**

8. The contamination of pathogens in live feed for broodstock.

9. The majority of the hatcheries operate without bio-security setup. The importance of the bio-security has been overlooked. Potential consequence is the viral infection in the hatchery. Many incidents of the viral infection in the hatchery have been diagnosed.

**Perspectives**

1. The extension of the duration of the hatchery operation
   Due to the establishment of the enclosure ponds in Northern Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang provinces, especially Yangtze River delta and Pearl River delta areas, demands for PL are now almost all year round. The hatcheries can thus operate on a non-stop basis. The operational costs are therefore significantly reduced.

2. Awareness of the importance of PL quality
   The demand for good quality “1st generation” PL is expected to increase. The hatcheries, which produce low quality PL, will be phased out and those, especially major producers with well-established brand names will prevail.
3. **Stock improvement and selective breeding**
   China has to expedite its research and development on the stock improvement and selective breeding of *L. vannamei* in order to solve the existing problem of inadequate supply of quality broodstock.

4. **The abuse or misuse of antibiotics**
   Effective measures has to be tightened on the control of illegal use of antibiotics and other prophylactic chemicals.

5. **Zoea II syndrome**
   The causes of Zoea II syndrome need to be identified and the problems resolved so that the overall successful rate of PL production can be ensured.

6. **The use of formalin in water treatment**
   Though it is the most effective method in sterilization, research is urgently required to define the advantages and disadvantages of using formalin in water treatment.
**Perspectives**

7. **The use of probiotics, prebiotics and immunoenhancers**
   More research is required to justify the use of probiotics, prebiotics and immunoenhancers in larvae-rearing. The correct way of using those health products (eg. dosage and time of application) is yet to be defined. The governmental regulations on the production and sales of those products are anticipated.

8. **The use of formulated feed for broodstock**
   Partial replacement of live feed with formulated feed for broodstock needs to be encouraged and promoted.

9. **Contamination in mass culture of algae**
   Method for solving the problem of the contamination of pathogens in mass culture of algae needs to be developed.
Perspectives

10. Contamination in live feed for broodstock
Potential pathogenic contamination of live feed, such as polychaete worms and oyster, deserves more attention.

11. The establishment of the bio-security systems
The importance and significance of the bio-security systems for the shrimp hatchery industry needs to be highlighted.
Shrimp pond enclosed for winter crop in Northern Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang

Shrimp pond enclosed for winter crop in Northern Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang
Shrimp pond enclosed for winter crop in Northern Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang

Larvae-rearing room (Evergreen Group)
Typical *L. vannamei* larvae-rearing tanks in China

Broodstock room (Evergreen Group)
L. vannamei spawners

Fully matured female L. vannamei
Tight bio-security: three steps in sterilization (Evergreen hatchery)

Vehicle washing basin at the gate

Foot and hand sterilization before entering larvae-rearing complex

Foot and hand sterilization before entering larvae-rearing room

Algal inocula in solid medium
Algal inocula in test tubes and flasks

Algal stock (left: *Chlorella sp.*, right: *Chaetoceros sp.*)
Algal stock (*Chaetoceros sp.*)

Algal stock (*Chaetoceros sp.* and *Chlorella sp.*)
Mass culture of algae in outdoor concrete tanks

*L. vannamei* postlarvae
L. vannamei postlarvae

Nursing (acclimation) farm on Donghai Island, Zhanjiang
Nursing (acclimation) tanks equipped with heaters

Thank you
For
Your Time and Patience

Evergreen Aquaculture Research Center on Donghai Island