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# Israel to pilot a project to support pond fishing industry

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In order to support the pond fishing industry in Israel, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will hold, an exposure event, on January 26, for the first public participation of the pond fishing industry, in cooperation with the Fish Breeders Organization, the Nature and Parks Authority and the Kinneret Innovation Centre. The participants will be asked to formulate solutions to two prominent challenges in the field: Marking fresh fish marketed without packaging and increasing transparency, alongside developing solutions for collecting fish carcasses in ponds. The event is part of the Ministryâ??s support for the industry in light of the lowering of the customs duty and in order to help upgrade the industry, as well as to encourage the purchase of local produce by marking the country of origin of the fish.

As at this point in time, fresh fish sold in Israel without packaging on the â??Fishing Countreâ?? shelf are not marked with any information about them, so Israeli consumers are deprived of the ability to identify the country of origin, the area of cultivation and the method of cultivation.Â
A survey conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development confirms this claim and indicates that there is great confusion about consumerism in this field and that the public is interested in making more informed decisions when purchasing. Thus, 45 per cent of the respondents to the survey answered that they do not know the place of production of the fish they purchase at the time of purchase and about 60 per cent of them were interested in obtaining information about the country of origin. 21 per cent of respondents would prefer to purchase locally farmed fish if the information was available to them.

In the public participation process, the Ministry of Agriculture is primarily interested in finding solutions to increase transparency in the retail trade in fresh fish and thereby increase the marketing value of fish of Israeli origin. This is a threefold challenge to finding a technological-marketing solution for the marking of the fish sold in bulk, at the retail points of sale and

for the type of information that the marking will present and reflect the needs. The goal is to find ways to strengthen the fish farming industry conducted in the local ponds. The requested solution for marking the fish should allow consumers to receive information about the fish in an efficient, fast and reliable manner and take into account the economic viability of the breeder and marketer, the health of the consumer and the quality of the product.

Another challenge that will be presented to the participants of the public participation event is the challenge of collecting fish carcasses from the ponds.

The current alternative used today is manual picking which requires permanent and expensive labour. The requested solution should be effective and easy to implement, taking into account the internal facilities in the breeding pond, and the breeding area, avoiding the creation of hazards, the well-being of the fish, the safety of the workers and more.

As part of the public participation event participating in small teams, the Ministry of Agriculture wishes to harness the Israeli innovation community through a holistic approach that connects experts from various disciplines, including from the fields of programming, engineering, economics, biotechnology, health and marketing to promote innovative and ground breaking solutions to the industryâ??s challenges. In order for the participants to understand the challenges and the solutions sought, the event will be held at the fish pond of Kibbutz Nir-David.

At the final event to be held in early March 2023, the participants will present their solutions to each of the challenges before a professional team of judges. The winning solutions will be evaluated as a pilot program and will receive a monetary award.