



Amphipods as feed for seahorse aquaculture.

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The main bottlenecks in seahorse culture could be reduced to two: diseases and feeding of new-born and early juveniles. The present study concentrates on the second and resumes the results of PIECEMO laboratory during the last 5 years on the development of a cost-effective amphipod culture protocol as an alternative for a continuous supply of live-prey or complement-feeding to cultured seahorses. The model species used were *Hippocampus erectus* and the amphipods *Parhyale hawaiiensis* and *Elasmopus pecteniscrus*. We present data on amphipod morphometry, nutritional value, sex-ratio, reproduction, population dynamics, potential feeds, and preliminary large scale culture systems. We also present data on seahorse feeding trials, both on the capture mechanics, prey selection, training to feed on frozen amphipods and growth rates when fed upon cultured amphipods. We finalize with a comparison on the pros and cons of large scale amphipod culture. Despite some drawbacks, our results demonstrate that amphipod production is a relatively novel solution to some of the problems faced by the seahorse ornamental culture industry.