



Ricardo Garcia, CEO of Chilean salmon producer Camanchaca. Photo: Lola Navarro / IntraFish

Camanchaca CEO Ricardo Garcia: GSI shows 'salmon farming is part of the solution'

IntraFish is rolling out a series of interviews with the CEOs of the GSI member companies looking into the achievements of the group in its five years of history.

by

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IntraFish is running an exclusive series of interviews with some of Global Salmon Initiative's (GSI) member CEOs, drilling down on the key achievements of the initiative, what future work needs to occur and how other seafood sectors can learn from GSI's experiences.

Today, Camanchaca CEO Ricardo Garcia lays out three key priorities for the group as it heads into the next five years of operation.

Why did you decide to join the GSI in the first place?

We realized events and trends surrounding the industry might damage its successful development and contribution to feeding the world, and we were overwhelmed because of the global reach of the potential problems.

We knew something had to be done globally to change and increase the industry's social license and to significantly improve its sustainability performance. Coincidentally, Novartis was promoting global sustainability for its key business partners, and we quickly engaged in a group that shortly became the GSI.

Why is it important?

Through the GSI we changed the course of the global industry, generated an example for other food and protein industries, and set out a path to ensure a more sustainable future for the supply of healthy protein.

The world has the challenge of feeding the increasing and emerging population, and to do so in a sustainable way. That is not a trivial challenge, but we are convinced the salmon industry is the best positioned sector to succeed.

"The GSI has designed a platform for knowledge-sharing between salmon farmers while maintaining the fiercely competitive nature of the marketplace"

What has the GSI achieved over the past five years?

Mainly generating pre-competitive collaboration among the majority of the global industry to become more sustainable; this is a continuing process. Setting up transparency standards so that everyone knows where we are standing is certainly a major step.

The launch of the sustainability report, for one, is a major milestone in industry-wide transparency.

GSI has brought together a group of CEOs from different companies and different regions and has designed an effective platform for them to exchange information and expertise to support accelerated environmental improvements, yet respecting and keeping the fiercely competitive nature of the marketplace.

We now have five years worth of data on the report, covering 14 key sustainability indicators, including the use of antibiotics, escapes, and also the individual progress towards Aquaculture Stewardship

Council (ASC) certification.

The sustainability report also provided a reference point for our stakeholders to follow our progress and to ensure all the members are truly committed to demonstrating measurable progress.

What are the current priorities for the group?

I think three priorities are fueling the group.

The first one is building up the reputation of the salmon farming industry and having dialogue with key stakeholders so that the truth of the beauty of this industry emerges. We have a fantastic story to tell the world.

This is the most sustainable of all the major proteins available to the global population [and] people need to know that. Today, we produce approximately 350 grams of salmon for every person on earth a year, and the recommended intake of salmon is 250 grams a week, or 12 kilos per year.



We have a long way to be there, and that is why we as farmers need to work not only on production efficiency and marketing but also on our global reputation.

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Second is advancing on our farming sites' ASC certifications. In 2013, there were no ASC- certified salmon farms, now almost 50 percent of GSI farms are certified. Camanchaca will have during the second half of 2018 almost 50 percent of its harvest certified.

Achieving ASC certification is no easy feat, but through the sharing of experiences we have been able to discuss bottlenecks with fellow farmers and work out how to take it from an impossible concept to

an everyday part of our operations.

Thirdly, improving biosecurity is a major factor of minimizing environmental impact. Fish health and welfare is always an important issue to salmon farmers. Through the GSI biosecurity taskforce we have established a highly efficient knowledge-transfer platform, where we can discuss best practices, new challenges and new approaches to fish health. Over the past five years, the GSI biosecurity taskforce has been focusing on non-medicinal approaches to sea lice, and the sharing of knowledge of these new developments to see what and how they can be most effective.

Where do you see the future of the GSI heading over the next five years?

I see GSI becoming a more structured organization, lifting even further its global profile and reach, and including a larger fraction of the industry.



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Likely also, I see GSI becoming the voice discussing food public policy in multilateral or global tables. GSI is pushing and will continue to push all its members and non-members forward to allocate more attention to the adoption of best practices that make the industry more sustainable.

In summary, setting in stone globally that salmon farming is part of the solution, and is far from being a problem.

What challenges has the GSI managed to overcome so far?

It has built a bridge between members to pre-competitively work together to make this world a better place. Members now trust each other, and trust is the basis for collaboration. Collaboration leads to

progress, and progress make people's life better and happier.

What challenges still remain?

In the future, we probably need to make GSI a more structured initiative, with a stronger organization. So far, it has based its development mostly on collaboration among members' executives, something very important in the first five years. However, I think in the next five years it will have to generate a dedicated yet slim organization to continue an effective and role.