

Frequently asked questions

Q: *What medicines should be kept on a fish farm?*

A: In reality very few. Disinfectants such as acriflavine, permanganate of potash or formalin are valuable for sterilizing tanks. Salt is a useful and benign substance that can reduce stress in fish under certain circumstances. Malachite green or methylene blue crystals are useful in eradicating external parasites. For trout farms, Furanace® is valuable against bacterial diseases.

Q: *What do I do when the fish seem to be sick?*

A: The golden rule is to cease feeding as most diseases are a result of poor water quality made worse by excessive feeding, resulting in uneaten feed breaking down into toxic ammonia. Increasing the water flow to dilute toxins or poor water quality is also essential. Try to isolate the fish pond or container from other ponds or tanks that are not showing the symptoms.

Q: *What do I do when all the fish are seen gasping at the surface?*

A: This is usually a sign of low oxygen content, often seen early in the morning. The water quality is probably low, or the fish containment overstocked. Carry out a partial water change and reduce the stocking load immediately, and cease feeding for several days until the water quality improves. Use some form of blower to increase oxygen content if the stocking rate remains high. If the ponds are enriched with fertilizers, reduce the amount used for a while and try to flush out the ponds with clean water.

Q: *What do I do when the fish stay on the bottom with clamped fins, are skittish, and refuse feed?*

A: This is usually a sign of high ammonia content. Do a water test to confirm this (anything over 0.1 ppm ammonia is high and can be lethal to some species). Carry out a water change, cease feeding, and take steps to improve the water quality either by filtration (in the case of tanks) or by through-flowing clean water in the case of ponds.

Q: *How can I prevent disease from spreading from pond to pond?*

A: If fish in a particular pond or cage are infected do not use any equipment such as nets or buckets from the infected pond or cage in the other ponds or cages. Try to sterilize all such equipment in acriflavine or permanganate after use. Water should not flow from the infected to the uninfected containment or else the disease will spread rapidly and total mortality may result.

