As wild fisheries stocks dwindle, there is increasing demand for aquaculture, as with any farmed animal, feed is critically important. Traditional live fish feeds such as rotifers and Artemia have been associated with very high mortality; low development rates and high incidence of deformities when used as the primary food source for a large number of species, including most of the high valued reef fish such as groupers and snappers. In the wild, copepods are the natural prey of virtually every fish larvae, especially reef fish. The inclusion of copepods in the larval rearing cycle of high valued tropical fish is has been shown to improved survival and development, as well as digestive track development, enzyme activities and pigmentation rates. However, only very little research is conducted about copepods, prompting the need to assess their potential as hatchery live feeds.

The aim of Tomas’ research project was to improve the intensive culture protocol of tropical calanoid copepods, to be used as live feeds for tropical aquaculture hatcheries. This was achieved through investigation of optimal culture parameters such as food quality and quantity, optimal stocking density, cultures in medium size volumes, influence of photoperiod on production and development of copepods.

Tomas presented at the 2011 International Conference on Copepoda in Merida, Mexico where he was able to network with the leaders in his field.

Thomas is now working as an aquaculture consultant at New Caledonia’s new Mariculture Technical Development Centre (CCDTAM) set up under the territory’s Agency for Economic Development; ADECAL.


