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## Health and Behavior

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Posted 10/12/2005 9:39 PM

### Fish-farming pioneer wins 'Nobel of food'

By Elizabeth Weise, USA TODAY

The \$250,000 World Food Prize, considered by many the Nobel Prize of food and agriculture, was awarded today to an Indian scientist credited with launching a "blue revolution" (a rapid increase in fish production) in the developing world.

Modadugu Gupta has spent 30 years creating a cheap and ecologically sustainable system of small-scale fish-farming using abandoned ditches and seasonally flooded fields and water holes smaller than the average swimming pool.

The small ponds become tiny food factories, churning out protein and income for more than 1 million families in Southern and Southeast Asia and Africa. Gupta's work has multiplied freshwater fish production in those countries by three to five times, says Kenneth Quinn, president of the World Food Prize Foundation.

In wet, low-lying countries such as Bangladesh and Laos, farmers routinely excavate soil to raise the level of their houses. This creates small ponds that fill with water in the rainy season. Roads also are built up with nearby soil, creating long, narrow ponds along roadways that can be used as fish farms.

The farmers, most of them poor women and landless farmers, typically raise as few as 200 fish, feeding the carp and tilapia farm waste such as rice and wheat bran. This creates high-protein food for their families and a cash crop for their financial needs.

Gupta recently retired from the WorldFish Center, a Malaysia-based research organization whose mission is to reduce poverty and hunger by improving fisheries and aquaculture. He will receive the award today in a Des Moines ceremony that's part of the World Food Prize International Symposium.

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