



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FAO LOANS FISH FARMING EXPERT TO FWS

Upon request of the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has assigned Dr. Shao-wen Ling, one of the world's leading pond-fish culturists, to the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife for a three-month period.

Dr. Ling, who has his doctor's degree in limnology from Cornell University, is a native of China. He will act as consultant for the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife on the establishment of a research laboratory and experimental station which is to be built in Arkansas to study fish propagation problems in rice-growing areas.

His main task will be to visit possible experimental sites, recommend pond layouts and develop plans for research in the fields of warm-water fish diseases and parasites, genetics, selective breeding, nutrition and other physiological requirements, and to make recommendations on fish-crop rotations.

Before beginning his assignment in the rice-growing area, Dr. Ling will survey research stations and warm-water fish hatcheries in the South and will consult with one of America's leading fish culturists, Dr. H. S. Swingle of Alabama Polytechnic Institute at Auburn.

In spite of the widespread practice of fish culture in foreign countries, the idea never took hold in the United States until in recent years when the rice farmers of Arkansas became interested in fish farming almost by accident. In bringing new rice acreage into production it was customary to build levees around a tract of land, filling the resulting reservoir with water and letting it stand for a couple of years until the timber died and the decaying vegetation enriched the soil.

Following the procedure, farmers soon found that the water in the reservoirs always contained abundant supplies of the local species of fish. Presently the question arose as to whether better breeds of fish might be raised to bring a greater yield and a more lucrative cash crop to the farmer.

To find the answer to this question, the Congress has authorized the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior to establish a laboratory and experiment station.

Dr. Ling has just completed an assignment in Ceylon assisting the government of that country in the development of its inland fisheries. When he completes his task in America he will go to Malaya to help that newly created independent nation with its fishery problems.

After receiving his doctorate from Cornell in 1933, Dr. Ling returned to China as Assistant Professor of Biology at the University of Amoy. In 1935, he moved on to the University of Shantung in Tsingtao as head of the Department of Biology. While there he organized a fishery research laboratory.

The Japanese invasion in July 1937 led to his evacuation and the following year he was one of the founders of the National Medical College at Kweiyang, where he served as head of the Department of Biomorphics (Developmental Biology). In 1939, the Hong Kong Government invited him to join its Fishery Research Institute as fishery biologist. He also served concurrently as guest lecturer at the University of Hong Kong.

When Hong Kong was occupied by the Japanese, Dr. Ling returned to Kweiyang and joined the Medical Training Center of the Ministry of National Defense. He also was director of the Kweiyang Provincial Science Institute.

With the coming of VJ Day, he was asked by the Ministry of Agriculture to organize a National Fishery Research Institute in Shanghai, and served as its first director.

Dr. Ling joined the staff of the Food and Agriculture Organization in the spring of 1949 and was assigned to the FAO Far Eastern Regional Office in Bangkok.

While in Thailand, he was instrumental in interesting His Majesty King Phumiphol Aduldej in fish farming; so much so that the latter converted an abandoned swimming pool on his palace grounds for the purpose of raising tilapia which were then distributed to the Thai farmers. The interest shown by His Majesty gave a great impetus to fish farming in Thailand and resulted in the creation of a new industry in that country.

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