



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
CHARLES H. BRONSON, Commissioner
The Capitol • Tallahassee, FL 32399-0800

Please Respond to:
Division of Aquaculture
1203 Governors Square Blvd, Fifth Floor
Tallahassee, Florida 32309
Telephone: 850-488-4033

June 7, 2005

Mr. Alan Blake
Yorktown Technologies, L.P.
P.O. Box 200753
Austin, TX 78720

Dear Mr. Blake:

As you may know production of tropical ornamental fish started in the 1920's in Miami but really took off when returning WWII veterans started to produce species they saw while serving overseas. The zebrafish or zebra danio (*Brachydanio rerio*) is native to the tropical portions of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. It was first described in 1822 by an English physician stationed in India and appeared in a book he published. The citation is: Hamilton-Buchanan, F. 1822. An account of the fishes found in the river Ganges and its branches. Edinburg and London. vii + 405 pp. + 39 pls.

The earliest citation concerning the zebra danio I can find in the Division's limited library is: Axelrod, H., C.W. Emmens, D. Sculthorpe, W. Vorderwinkler, and N. Pronek. 1971. Exotic Tropical Fishes. T.F.H Publications, Jersey City, NJ. The species is described as being, "This is probably the most popular among the egg-laying fishes, and for good reasons."

I spoke to David Boozer, Executive Director of the Florida Tropical Fish Farms Association, about the zebra danio and early producers. He provided a few names and phone numbers and I called the people he suggested. I interviewed:

- Sydney Liles, a former president of the Florida Tropical Fish Farms Association, who specializes in angelfish. He began farming in 1966 and initially produced zebra danio as they were in demand at the time. Mr. Liles was of the opinion that the zebra danio had been in continual production in the state since the start of ornamental fish farming.
- C.A Prevatt worked on a farm in 1950-55 producing zebra danios. Mr. Prevatt currently works in sales at Segrest Farms.
- Don Adams who started work for H. Wolf and Sons (a farm started in the mid 1930s) spawning zebra danios in 1949. Mr. Adams related the species was well established in the trade and in the Florida industry. He felt it had been produced in Florida since 1918.

As a conservative conclusion, the zebra danio was in production in 1949. Production probably occurred much earlier but it is doubtful that there are retired farmers left that actually spawned the fish, as Mr. Adams attested, and still alive or mentally alert enough to provide their comments.

Sincerely,

Paul Zajick
Biological Administrator

cc: Craig Watson, Director, UF-Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory
R. Sherman Wilhelm, Director, Division of Aquaculture



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