

Tilapia farming in Solomon Islands



A fish pond provides nutritious fish for the family. Before you start think about how much fish your family needs to eat, whether you will also have extra fish to sell, where to sell your fish and whether you can sell them at a profit. Visit other people who are farming fish and find out what they think.

What you need to begin

- Land with soil that holds water
- Space to dig a pond
- Water supply
- Labour and tools (spades, pick, hoe)
- Small fish to start you off
- Feed (household food scraps, termites)
- Fertilizer (pig, chicken or cow manure)
- Net for regular harvesting



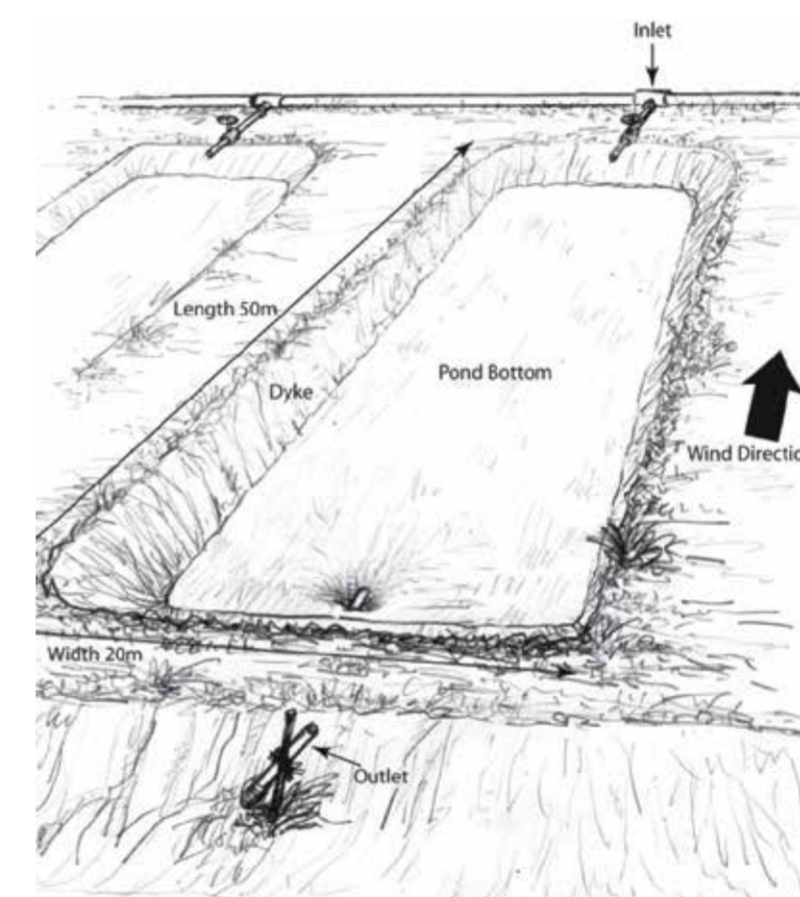
Tilapia facts

1. Solomon Islands has the *Mozambique tilapia*. It is not native to Solomon Islands; it was introduced more than 70 years ago and is now common in streams, lakes and coastal rivers.
2. Mozambique tilapia is a tough fish, easy to breed and eats a variety of foods, including household scraps.
3. Mozambique tilapia can grow to about 20 cm long when managed properly



1. Making your pond

First, decide how big a pond area you want. One big pond is easier to build than several smaller ponds. Ponds should be 0.6 m - 1 m deep with sloping sides and a nearby supply of water.



Pond Size	Fish production (in one year)
6 x 4 m	6 - 12 kg
12 x 8 m	25 - 50 kg
15 x 10 m	40 - 70 kg



2. Preparing your pond

Your pond should be green in colour; this is natural food for tilapia. Start to fertilize the pond with green or dry animal manure (chicken, pig, or cattle) a month before stocking. Once your pond is green gently introduce fish so they are not damaged, at about 5-10 fish/m² (if you cannot get this many fish, start with less and slowly increase as you can afford more fish).

3. Managing your pond

Once you have fish in the pond use dry animal manure to keep the pond green. Animal urine is also good. A pigsty on the pond bank can fertilize the pond with wastes directly draining to the pond.

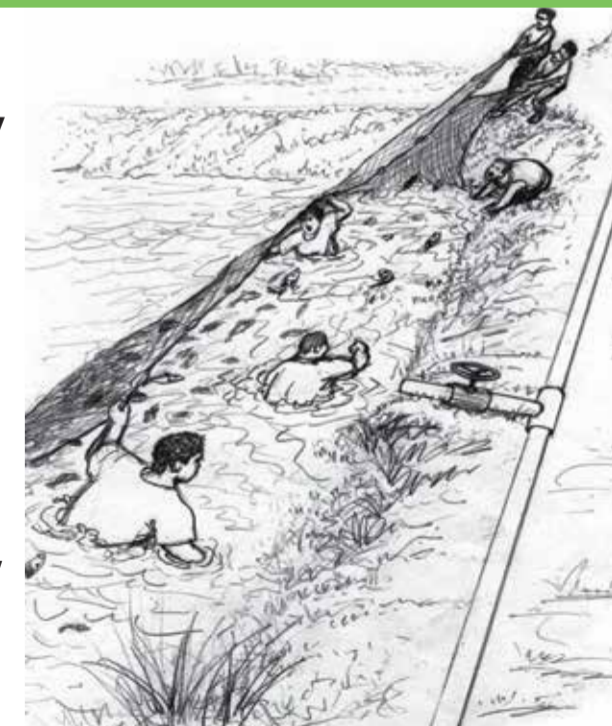


Feed fish once or twice each day (morning and afternoon) with chopped household scraps and termites. You can throw the food directly onto the pond surface or you might like to use a feeding tray. Feed at same spot in the pond. Adjust the amount you feed based on how much they eat. Do not over-feed.



4. Harvesting

Generally, fish are ready to harvest 3-4 months after stocking. When they have grown longer than 10 cm they are mature and will start to breed. You need to remove the bigger fish about once a month, or the pond becomes overcrowded and fish stop growing. Keep stocking density less than 10 fish per m². Leave smaller fish to grow. Over time you will learn how to best manage your pond, but it is easy to forget what you've done. Keep a book and record when you stock fish (how many and how big), when you harvest fish (how many and how big) and the materials you used pond.



Where can I get advice? WorldFish, MFMR aquaculture and SPC can provide further information. Visit WorldFish in Auki, Honiara or Gizo and talk to our staff. Visit other farmers within your area or a farmer you know. Form a group and meet regularly to share experiences.