One of the main goals of the World Aquaculture Society and of its Latin America and Caribbean Chapter is to bring together industry, academia, and aquaculture producers at various meetings or conventions where they can share information and the most recent advances in research and technology. I would like to highlight one recent such meeting and to share the excitement about two more LACC events taking place this year.

In early March our chapter co-organized the first Global Catfish Conference in Tampico, Tamaulipas, Mexico, together with the Mexican National Catfish Council and the Mexican National Committee of Aquaculture and Fisheries. Tamaulipas is the largest producer of catfish in Mexico with 40 percent of the national total, or around 1,200 tons per year. The state also produces 85 percent of the country’s fingerlings, about 10 million. Choosing Tamaulipas and its capital city for this workshop was a tribute to these contributions and to the great potential for improved catfish farming in the area. The convention included renowned international speakers, including Michael Masser from Texas A&M University, Débora Machado Fracalossi from Federal University of Santa Catarina in Brazil, Michael McGee from Caribe Fish, Puerto Rico, and George Fullerton, Jeff Terhune, and Bill Daniels from Auburn University. The workshop also included participation of distinguished Mexican catfish researchers, among them Jorge Homero Rodríguez Castro, Gerardo Amador Cano, Manuel Parra Bracamonte, Isidro Otoniel Montelongo Alfaro, Benavidez González Flaviano, Fernando Jiménez Guzmán, María de la Luz Vázquez Sauceda, Andrés Záñiga Cortes, Francisco Arregui, and Héctor Hugo Gojon Báez. With more than 200 attendees from catfish farming regions, this workshop was a great start for thematic LACC conferences.

Speaking of thematic conferences, I am glad to announce that LACC will co-sponsor the VIII International Symposium on Aquatic Animal Health and Food Safety to be held in Ensenada, Baja California, México, on September 22-23 of this year. The purpose of this event is to share the latest information on aquatic animal health and food safety, and to provide aquaculture producers with the tools needed to make informed decisions for the consolidation of aquaculture in the area. Many producers have indicated they are excited about this meeting and in particular about a special session on case studies of diseases in aquatic organisms and their solutions, which I’m sure will be very well-attended.

LACC’s annual meeting, LACQUA16 will take place in Lima, Peru, from November 28 to December 1st. This event is expected to attract more than 600 attendees and 32 trade show booths. Among the special sessions to be included in this convention are:

- Fish culture
- Crustacean culture
- Tilapia culture
- Other species
- Production systems
- Sustainable aquaculture
- Health and diseases
- Physiology and genetics
- Nutrition and feeding
- Processing and economics
- Aquaculture and environment
- Education and aquaculture careers

Please plan early to attend this meeting and take the opportunity of a lifetime to see Peru’s famed archeological, colonial, and natural treasures. Stay tuned for updates regarding LACQUA16 and visit www.was.org for detailed conference information.

I would like to remind our members of our upcoming chapter election. This year we are inviting nominations for the positions of Secretary and Director. These two new elected officers will begin their terms at our 2016 Annual Meeting in Lima. If you would like to submit a nomination, or to volunteer, please contact the LACC Home Office at lacc@was.org. It is through the generous contribution of the board members’ time that LACC can provide services to our membership, and for that reason I would like to thank the current board of LACC and the Steering Committees of the Catfish Global Conference and LACQUA16 for their valuable contributions. The progress of the chapter and the realization of this important event has been a result of your hard work. I look forward to see you all in Lima soon.

— Lorenzo Juarez, President