Recently, representatives of Aller Aqua Poland visited Lithuania, where a unique rainbow trout farm is situated in beautiful natural surroundings. Unlike traditional flow-through farms, this farm operates as a modern Recirculation Aquaculture System (RAS), which reuses water after proper filtration and treatment, supplemented with a small amount of the so-called "ground water."

Fishnet (www.fishnet.lt) began its operations seven years ago and has been collaborating with Aller Aqua for more than three years. We invite you to read an interview with one of the two owners of the company, Vaidas Juodis, conducted by Przemysław Rutkowski, the marketing coordinator of Aller Aqua Poland.

Przemysław Rutkowski: Hello Vaidas, thank you for the warm welcome. First and foremost, congratulations on choosing such a great location for your farm.

Vaidas Juodis: Welcome to our farm. Thank you, we really put a lot of thought into this location due to several factors that are crucial in RAS farming. First, being close to a river whose course was redirected from this very area, we have access to cool and clean groundwater, with temperatures not exceeding 12°C in summer and 9°C in winter. Additionally, there are no buildings or roads around the farm, it's a remote area, which gives us some freedom in our operations. One example of this is the large solar panel installation we recently set up (650 kWh).

PR: Indeed, electricity plays a major role in RAS systems as it powers all the equipment that controls the system.

VJ: That's right. Mechanical filters, biofilters, water pumps – all of it is powered by electricity. But let's not forget, the second crucial factor in farming, not just in RAS, is the feed.

PR: It seems everything ultimately revolves around the feed. So, I have to ask, could you briefly tell us about the beginnings of your journey with Aller Aqua?

VJ: Of course. Let's go back to the early days of our operation. From the very start, we wanted to run a RAS farm. We first experimented with salmon in a "garage system" that was literally set up in a garage. As you can imagine, it didn't end well. When we were ready to move to a professional system, we decided to try farming trout in RAS. Marcin (Marcin Walczak – Export Director of Aller Aqua Poland) organized a visit for us to Poland, where we could see how professional RAS farms operate. The farm we visited used Aller Gold feed for the trout, but we didn't want to limit ourselves to just one supplier. To be honest, in the beginning, we used feed from various

companies. We studied their impact on water quality, faeces production, dust residue, and of course, the feed conversion ratio (FCR). In the end, we decided to run an entire cycle with Aller Gold, the trout feed that Marcin said was ideal for RAS systems. We tried it and…

PR: I can feel the suspense building.

VJ: (laughs) If it hadn't worked, we probably wouldn't be talking now. But seriously, no dust, solid and easy-to-remove faeces – that's what we noticed right away. After analyzing the results, we found that with trout weighing 300-400g, we were achieving an FCR of 0.8.

PR: Impressive results. This is a significant accomplishment.

VJ: And all this while feeding below your recommendations! For 300 tons of trout, we use about 700kg of feed daily, which is 90% of the dose you recommend.

PR: We always mention that recommendations are one thing, but in truth every farm, be it flow-through or RAS have their own unique features, which must be understood and followed. Clearly, you've done your homework.

VJ: Our failed garage experiment taught us a lot (laughs). But seriously, the system is working very efficiently, and next year we plan to increase production by another 300 tons. Of course, we'll continue our cooperation with Aller Aqua.

PR: Congratulations on your hard work and the results you've achieved. Thank you for the conversation, and I hope that during my next visit, I'll be pleasantly surprised again – this time by double the amount of trout swimming in the tanks! See you soon!