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# Carp Food

The stuff that makes carp tick

[WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY:  
JAMES ANDERSON]

# THE TANK TEST

From Nash to Mainline to Bait & Feed – The Tank Tests is the place where we really find out what ‘live carp’ really want to eat – not what your nostrils think

## PART 20

### Introduction

As I write this we are coming to the end of April and in the last week I’ve finally managed to find time to do some angling! I’ve just started fishing a new venue and on my second trip I managed to catch one too, which was nice.

As usual we’ve been very busy here at Otley College, our famous Tank Test carp are very happy as they’ve just moved into a new home. They had outgrown their old tank, so have now taken up residency in a new 8ft aquarium that has been set up by some of our students. This shouldn’t affect the tests too much but I will be taking it into account when looking at the results.

This month we have four liquids from The Bait & Feed Company on test. There are some quite interesting flavours as you’ll see and are maybe a little different from a lot of liquids that we have looked at.

The Bait & Feed Company has been supplying carp bait to the retail market since 1999. They offer a comprehensive range of carp baits such as boilies, pellets, particles and groundbaits via their mail order department and more recently through their shop.

### The Facilities

The liquids will be tested on the same group of Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) consisting of five fish supplied by Priory Fisheries, Devon and are a mixture of commons, mirrors and leathers. For more information go to: [www.prioryfisheries.co.uk](http://www.prioryfisheries.co.uk)

There’s a slight change to the facilities this month, the tank being used is an 8ft aquarium that contains 900-litres of water and the water is circulated through an external filter using an 800-litres per hour pond pump.

The tank has a running temperature ranging between 16 and 22 degrees centigrade, the filter consists of two sections the first is designed for suspended solid removal, the second containing a bed of plastic media for biological filtration.

#### ‘It’s a floater’

A fish’s swim bladder is a gas fill organ that contains enough gas to make the fish neutrally buoyant. This enables the fish to remain in mid-water without have to swim.

#### Atmospheric pressure

The buoyancy of the swim bladder is affected by atmospheric pressure and with increasing pressure a fish may become negatively buoyant.

#### Up or down

A carp’s swim bladder consists of two parts that enables it to tilt up or down in order to feed from the bottom or surface with ease.

#### Just one

More primitive fish such as those in the salmon family (salmonids) have a swim bladder that consists of a single chamber.

## Disclaimer

While the facilities used are in the Otley College Fisheries Unit, the observations and discussion of the tests are my own views and are not those of Otley College. The results of the tests are not scientifically sound and the experimental design is wide open for criticism. The idea behind the test is to give an overview of specific baits and record the carp's reaction to them based on my observations. This will help you to decide which bait might be best for you to use this season.

## Experimental Design

I will be carrying out the same two basic trials on each liquid:

### TRIAL ONE: Trial one: How does the liquid behave in water?

The first trial is designed to demonstrate how each liquid behaves underwater. A solid PVA bag filled with boilie dip will be placed into a tank of water. The tank will be kept at 20 degrees centigrade to replicate water temperatures found in natural circumstances. The PVA bags used in the trial are 50-micron Fox Fade Away PVA Bags that are designed for winter use.

Once the bag has been placed into the water it will be timed and its behaviour recorded. By looking at how each dip behaves we will gain an idea of how it disperses and dissolves in water.

### TRIAL TWO: How do fish react to the smell of the liquid?

This trial is designed to see how fish react to the smell of the boilie dip. This will be achieved by introducing 5 millilitres of liquid into the filtration system, resulting in the smell of the dip entering the tank. The results of the trial will be based on the observation of a purely scent stimulated feeding response.

The scoring system has changed slightly this month as we've added an extra score category to help indicate which liquid is the overall winner. The new score will be: '5' Off the scale! Look out for this one as any baits or liquids scoring this will definitely be worth a try. Each dip will be given a score based on the degree of stimulation and enthusiasm to feed observed following the introduction of the dip into the filter. In order to gain the best results I will only test one of the boilie dips per day on the group of fish. The scoring system is as follows:

- 1 No reaction at all. The fish exhibit no signs of feeding activity. Just carry on their normal behaviour, not good!
- 2 Small reaction. Fish observed tasting the water. The carp start mouthing sand around the bottom of the tank and exhibit slightly increased activity.
- 3 Good reaction. Fish observed rapidly tasting the water. Fish actively searching for food around the tank bottom.
- 4 Mental! Frantic tasting of the water. Frantic feeding activity, searching for food around the bottom of the tank.
- 5 Off the scale! Carp going completely crazy due to the scent of the bait in the tank. Sand flying everywhere and lots of very aggressive feeding behaviour.

Liquid ready to go into the tank

## THE BAIT & FEED'S LIQUID FOOD EDGES

Ideas to get the most from the liquids this month

### Sweet Corn Extract

Use fake corn and have total faith in it or still struggling to get your head around casting out a piece of unflavoured plastic? Whether you fit into category one or two it doesn't matter, because soaking your fake corn in this stuff will increase its attractiveness massively. Pierce the corn with a baiting needle to help it soak the liquid right up.

### Condensed Milk Extract

As with the Coconut Cream Extract, thanks to being white in colour they lend themselves perfectly to cloudy spod mixes – i.e. the really watered down ones containing loads of little teeny pellets, maggots and groundbait, which are perfect for spodding over Zigs.



### Juicy Pineapple Extract

A proven fish-loving flavour, so adding it to your Stick, spod or Method mix will increase its pulling power no-end. Because the liquid is totally PVA-friendly, try fishing a mesh PVA bag filled with pellets with pineapple pop-up and glugging the whole lot for 60 seconds before casting out. An ideal approach for 'runs waters'.

### Coconut Cream Extract

Again, perfect for clouding the water. Make up a spod mix containing plenty of groundbait, mini pellets, salmon fry crumb, sweetcorn, maggots, casters and then keep adding lake water until the groundbait won't soak up anymore and you're left with a really sloppy mix. This will then cloud the whole water column driving the fish mental.

## This Month's Liquids

I have compiled a review of each of the boilie dips using information gained from the Bait & Feed Company's website – [www.baitfeedonline.co.uk](http://www.baitfeedonline.co.uk)



### JUICY PINEAPPLE EXTRACT

The Bait & Feed Company has taken on a classic flavour. This rich yellow liquid has a strong pineapple scent, is PVA-friendly and can be used as a soak or as an alternative, pour a little into a clear PVA bag or over a mesh PVA bag. It adds attraction to any product.



### COCONUT CREAM EXTRACT

A white sweet liquid that is PVA-friendly and can be used as a groundbait or particle additive or even a dip. It smells good enough to drink and will enhance any product, helping to create an attractive cloud in the water column.



### CONDENSED MILK EXTRACT

A bright white liquid that smells good enough to drink! Condensed milk has been recommended as an attractant for several years to add to particles and this version can also be added to particles or groundbait to add attraction in a similar way.



### SWEET CORN EXTRACT

Sweetcorn is one of the most successful carp baits of all-time and something that has accounted for many fish captures. This creamy sweet yellow liquid can be used in any application, smells a lot like the real thing and contains all the goodness of the corn but in a liquid form.

# THE RESULTS

## TRIAL ONE: How does the liquid behave in water?

### JUICY PINEAPPLE EXTRACT

A dense liquid that fell straight to the bottom of the tank, soon spreading out as the PVA bag melted. The Juicy Pineapple liquid hugged the bottom of the tank and covered it with a thick sticky layer. After 30 minutes the liquid was still clearly visible.

### COCONUT CREAM EXTRACT

The PVA bag of white liquid sunk very quickly to the bottom of the tank. Within two minutes the Fox Fade Away Bag had split open and the liquid had spread over an area covering 20cm. The bright white liquid really stood out against the dark bottom of the tank. After 30 minutes the liquid remained un-dissolved in the water.

### CONDENSED MILK EXTRACT

A very dense liquid that caused the PVA bag to rapidly sink to the bottom of the tank. Very similar behaviour to the Coconut Cream as the white Condensed Milk Extract spreads over the bottom of the tank creating an attractive patch that covers the area.

### SWEET CORN EXTRACT

As the PVA bag of sweet yellow liquid falls through the water it begins to dissolve and the liquid seeps out. Sweet Corn Extract is soon spread over a large area turning the bottom of the tank bright yellow.

Like the ease of ready-prepared particles but don't like the fact you're using the same hemp or parti-blend as everyone else? Then try Bait & Feed's Particle Prepared Specials.



## FOOD: TESTED

# THE TANK TEST

### TRIAL TWO: How do fish react to the smell of the liquid?

**3 GOOD REACTION** The thick yellow liquid was added to the filter and gradually entered the tank with the flow of water. The carp's attention was soon focused around the inlet pipe as they began getting very stimulated by the Juicy Pineapple. Definitely a good result for this liquid.



**3 GOOD REACTION** As the five-millilitres of coconut liquid was introduced into the filter the scent began to seep into the tank creating an attractive cloud and the carp began to investigate. The liquid stimulated a considerable increase in feeding behaviour as the fish began tasting the water column and digging up gravel.



**2 SMALL REACTION** A white cloud slowly fell through the water column and the carp started mouthing the gravel around the bottom of the tank and exhibited slightly increased activity. This activity was not prolonged and normal behaviour was soon resumed.



**4 MENTAL!** As the scent of the bright yellow liquid entered the tank the fish were observed rapidly tasting the water and picking up mouthfuls of gravel. The carp began actively searching for food around the tank bottom that continued for several minutes as they charged up and down the tank!



### Conclusion

Well, as I said, we had some interesting liquids on test this month that consisted of some quite unusual flavours. Starting with Trial One, all of the liquids tested sunk very quickly to the bottom of the tank and stayed there. Based on the results, both the white liquids tested would really cloud up the water and could be really attractive to carp. They could be mixed with particle and would create an attractive blanket covering the lakebed. All the liquids were clearly very dense and didn't seem to dissolve into the water very quickly. They stuck to the bottom of the tank creating a very bright patch of colour. If used in a PVA bag this would add extra visual attraction to a hookbait.

Moving onto Trial Two there were definitely some liquids that stood out from the crowd. The Condensed Milk didn't perform as well as the others, while it created an attractive cloud in the water column and the carp showed some increase in feeding behaviour they soon lost interest. The carp were stimulated into a strong response by the Juicy Pineapple and Coconut Extracts and they really started hunting around the tank for food, tasting the water and gravel below the inlet pipe.

The liquid that really stood out for me was the Sweet Corn Extract; it scored a MENTAL! which really set it above the other liquids. The carp showed a large increase in feeding and began frantically sucking and blowing out gravel below the inlet pipe as the dense liquid settled between the small stones.

The Sweet Corn Extract did stand out to me before the trial as something that may perform well and it would definitely help boost all baits. Why not try using it to soak sweetcorn or maize in order to give it a little edge?

That's it for this month as we continue our quest to find the very best carp baits so you don't have to!

James Anderson BSc (Hons)

