

SFA launches Aquatic Animal Health Services

The Singapore Food Agency (SFA) has launched the Aquatic Animal Health Services (AAHS) on 1 August 2023. The service aims to help aquaculture farms prevent and control diseases that can affect the survival and growth rate of aquatic animals and impact harvests.

2 SFA has engaged Vettrust Singapore Pte Ltd through a tender exercise to administer the AAHS through the provision of professional consultations and disease investigations. From today, farms can start to consult aquatic animal health vets/professionals under the service provider for professional consultations and disease investigations up to a cap of three hours per session over the next four years. More details on the service are attached in the Annex.

3 The AAHS will also enable SFA to gather aggregate information on the disease situation and areas for improvement on biosecurity practices in each farming region, which will be beneficial in the overall planning and resourcing to better support the local aquaculture industry.

4 Dr Astrid Yeo, Senior Director of SFA's Regulatory Standards & Veterinary Office, said: "The AAHS underscores our commitment to food security. This service is a step towards ensuring the sustainability of our tropical marine aquaculture and securing a steady supply of safe seafood. It is heartening to know that 11 farms have already signed up for AAHS. We encourage more farms to make use of this service to improve their farm biosecurity and management."

5 Mr Kelvin Tang, Director of Goh Marine Fishery (one of the farms which has signed up for AAHS), said: “The AAHS is a good initiative from SFA to identify possible diseases and how to handle the situation to prevent spreading of the disease. It also enables our workers to learn to identify diseases earlier to minimise fish mortality. We signed up for this service as it will be very expensive or make no economic sense for individual farmers to seek such assistance from professionals on our own.”

6 SFA will continue to seek feedback from farms on the AAHS to ensure it remains beneficial and relevant to the industry.

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Annex: Details and scope of AAHS

Under the AAHS, farms can seek the assistance of veterinary professionals to develop and implement good biosecurity and animal health management, and carry out disease investigations. The AAHS will include the associated laboratory diagnostic analyses for health screening during scheduled consultations, or to identify cause(s) during a disease investigation, as well as interpretation of the results and advice to farmers on improving their farm management.

2 The AAHS will allow farms to experience and understand the benefits of professional support for their farm biosecurity and management, and to assist farmers to better manage their farms going forward. SFA also expect farms to progressively incorporate professional services into their routine practices.

3 SFA will fund each farm two consultations annually in Years 1 and 2, followed by one consultation per year in Years 3 and 4, as well as one disease investigation per year throughout the four years. The funded consultations and disease investigations can be up to three hours per session, with the associated lab analyses provided to the farmers. Farmers will bear the costs of extended or extra consultations and disease investigations, prescribed veterinary drugs and chemicals, vaccines, transport, and miscellaneous expenses if required.