



Sembawang Animal Quarantine Station - *where animal health and welfare matter*

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ASEAN ministers making a united stand at the signing ceremony of the Agreement for Establishment of ASEAN Animal Health Trust Fund



Strengthening regional cooperation at AMAF and AMAF+3 Meetings

Singapore successfully hosted the 28th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) and the 6th AMAF Meeting of the AMAF Plus Three (ASEAN plus People's Republic of China, Japan and Republic of Korea) on 16 and 17 November 2006 respectively. The Minister for National Development, Mr Mah Bow Tan, chaired the 28th AMAF and 6th AMAF+3 Meetings, while the Minister of State for National Development, Ms Grace Fu, led the Singapore delegation which included Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) officers.

As the key organiser of the meetings, AVA started its preparations early and worked closely with different agencies to ensure that the programmes proceeded smoothly and delegates enjoyed their stay in Singapore. Besides a courtesy call on the Acting President at the Istana by the AMAF ministers, delegates were also hosted to dinners and a field trip to AVA's Animal and Plant Health Centre and Veterinary Public Health Centre. Additional visits to various places of interest were also arranged for the spouses of delegates.

A significant outcome of the meeting was the signing of the Agreement for Establishment of ASEAN Animal Health Trust Fund by AMAF Ministers. The Fund will serve as the vehicle in the implementation of unified and harmonized animal health programmes in ASEAN, including programmes to control and eradicate bird flu. In addition to the contributions made by the ASEAN member countries, the Fund is open to financial contributions from ASEAN Dialogue Partners, international organisations and private sector for implementing sustainable animal disease control programmes in ASEAN.

In the spirit of ASEAN cooperation and solidarity, the AMAF Meeting also endorsed the following proposals:

- Development of the ASEAN Good Agricultural Practices (ASEAN GAP) for the production, harvesting and post-harvest handling of fresh fruit and vegetables. The ASEAN GAP will be used as a benchmark in developing national GAP.



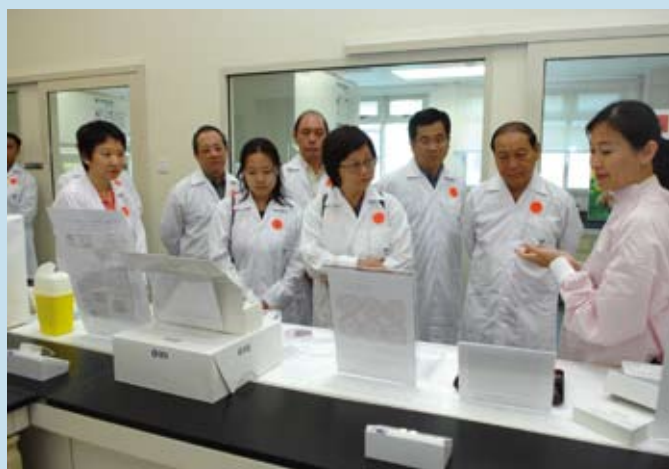
Minister Mah Bow Tan and ASEAN delegates having a go at hand chimes under tutelage of students from Haig Girls' School during the farewell dinner



ASEAN ministers made a courtesy call on Acting President, Mr JY Pillay at the Istana

- Harmonisation of 117 maximum residue limits of pesticides in vegetables, fruits and cash crops. This measure aims to protect consumers' health and to facilitate trade in the commodities.
- Harmonisation of ASEAN Standards for mango, pineapple and durian to ensure that they are available fresh to the consumers after preparation and packaging.
- Development of ASEAN Standard for Inactivated Canine Parvovirus Vaccine to control canine viral diarrhoea.
- Establishment of the terms of reference and scope for cooperation and collaboration under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership to further strengthen the implementation of regional fisheries programmes and mechanism.
- Development of two initiatives for ASEAN-Japan Cooperation in Agriculture, namely, "Strengthening of Partnership among Japan and ASEAN countries, and "South-South Cooperation Promotion Project for Agricultural Productivity Enhancement in Developing Countries".

The AMAF+3 Meeting endorsed the extension of the pilot project on East Asia Emergency Rice Reserve for one more year till March 2008 and the 2nd Phase of ASEAN Food Security Information System project, which has contributed to greater understanding, dissemination and analysis of regional food security data and information among ASEAN+3 countries. In addition, the AMAF+3 Meeting endorsed a number of new project proposals and training courses.



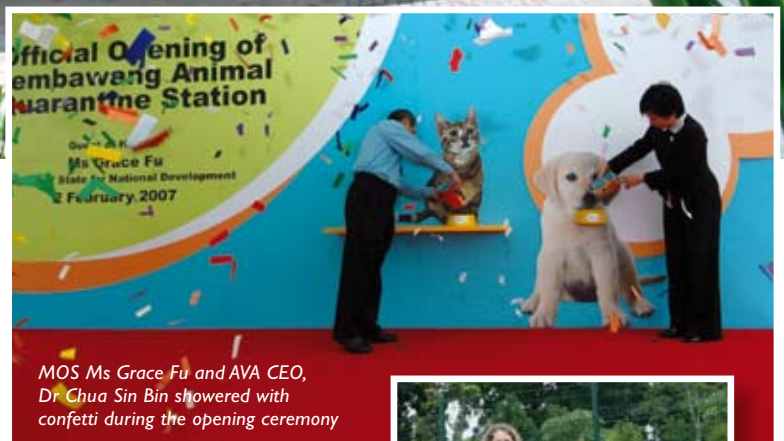
Ministers and delegates visiting AVA's Animal and Plant Health Centre



Mrs Mah Bow Tan played host to spouses of delegates over a luncheon at CHIJMES



Sembawang Animal Quarantine Station - where animal health and welfare matter



MOS Ms Grace Fu and AVA CEO, Dr Chua Sin Bin showered with confetti during the opening ceremony

As the national authority for animal health and welfare, the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) has in place comprehensive animal health and quarantine programmes to keep out exotic diseases such as rabies.

The new Sembawang Animal Quarantine Station (SAQS) replaces the former Jurong Animal Quarantine Station (JAQS) and was officially opened on 2 February 2007. The main role of SAQS is to ensure that no exotic animal disease of public health or economic significance is introduced into Singapore.

The exercise of quarantine control on imported pet animals mitigates the risk of exotic animal diseases, such as rabies, from affecting animal and public health. Rabies (or 'mad dog' disease), a dreadful disease, can be passed on to humans from close contact with the saliva of infected animals through bites, scratches or licks on broken skin surfaces. Affecting the nervous system, rabies is fatal to both animals and humans once the symptoms of the disease develop, and death occurs in a few days.



Exercise fields for owners to walk their pets



Left to Right:
Snapshots of isolation room, cattery room and kennel

AVA has imposed a 30-day quarantine for all dogs and cats coming from rabies-risk countries. Only dogs and cats imported from countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, are currently exempted from AVA's quarantine requirements.

Located at 10, Lorong Chencharu, the SAQS has a total of 80 kennels and 65 cattery rooms that are either air-conditioned or fitted with fans. Pet owners can also make use of amenities such as exercise fields and grooming rooms at the SAQS. Pet owners can be assured that their furry friends are in safe hands as the SAQS is managed by a team of professional staff who are experienced in animal handling and care.

At the opening of SAQS, guest-of-honour, Ms Grace Fu (Minister of State for National Development), announced that AVA intends to review its current quarantine policy. Under the proposed risk management approach, all dogs and cats from countries assessed by AVA to be of minimal rabies risk, and which have met AVA's vaccination and test requirements, can be imported into Singapore without the need to undergo quarantine.

However, dogs and cats from non-rabies-free countries would still need to undergo quarantine. AVA will announce the scheme once the review has been completed.



SAQS staff attentively providing medical care to pets

AVA's series of Responsible Pet Ownership advertisements :A Resounding Success!

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) bagged the Readers' Choice IMPACT award organised by TODAY newspaper in 2006 with its latest series of Responsible Pet Ownership advertisements which aim to deter the public from getting pets on impulse.

The advertisements' deliberate attempt to juxtapose the animals with toys and memorabilia brought across the message that pets cannot be shelved away but require their owners' lifelong commitment and care.

Available also in the form of free postcards for pickup island-wide, the advertisements proved to be so popular that 160,000 pieces of the postcards were snapped up in no time.

AVA thanks the team from Graphikate Pte Ltd for their goodwill in producing the advertisements on a pro bono basis. Their creativity have helped disseminate the responsible pet ownership message. The team's efforts have helped to achieve dramatic visuals that landed the series with the most popular advertisement award!





AVA ups pet shop standards with new grading system

To safeguard the welfare of animals, the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) licenses pet shops that keep and display pets for sale. All pet shops in Singapore are required to have a pet shop licence and comply with licence conditions which aim to ensure the provision of adequate and proper care and housing for the animals and appropriate information on pet care and ownership to customers.

However, despite strict enforcement of the licence conditions, AVA continued to receive complaints against pet shops in areas such as incorrect pet care advice, poor customer service and business ethics.

To raise the standards of animal welfare and professionalism in pet shops, AVA plans to introduce a new grading system for pet shops. Apart from giving clients the assurance that the pet shop they patronise is of an acceptable standard, the grading system also aims to promote responsible pet ownership through better customer education and information dissemination.

The system will be first rolled out to pet shops selling dogs, cats and small mammals. AVA officers will inspect the pet shops for their compliance with licence conditions and adoption of best practices. Inspected pet shops will subsequently be given their grades – A, B, C or D, based on their level of compliance. Grade A pet shops are those with the highest compliance rates and D grade pet shops, the lowest.

Pet shops that have scored well will be exempted from frequent inspection. Grade A pet shops will be inspected once a year (at renewal of pet shop licence), Grade B pet shops twice a year, Grade C pet shops thrice a year and Grade D pet shops will be inspected more than three times a year. Besides having to be inspected more frequently, the licensee and shop staff of Grade D pet shops are also required to attend remedial training. Furthermore, a pet shop that consistently receives a D Grade may run the risk of not having its licence renewed.

The grading will be reviewed annually at licence renewal or when the pet shop is compounded for an offence, which can be major or minor. Breaches of conditions related to housing and environment, and management and healthcare which impact animal welfare directly, are considered major offences. Pet shops that have been convicted under the Animals and Birds Act, Wild Animals and Birds Act and Endangered Species Act will be automatically graded D.

Pet shops are required to display their grades in their premises, and their grades will also be posted on the AVA website. This will help customers make informed decisions in patronising pet shops that uphold and maintain high animal welfare standards.

Biosecurity measures against bird flu at poultry slaughterhouses

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) continues to stay vigilant in preventing the incursion of bird flu by adopting a risk-based, multi-layered defence strategy. Its comprehensive measures include: control at source, border control and local control.

To ensure that poultry and egg supplies come from safe sources, AVA works closely with the veterinary authorities of exporting countries to only allow imports of poultry, birds and avian products from approved poultry export farms located in bird-flu free zones.

At points of entry at the border, AVA officers conduct intensive checks on all consignments of live poultry, birds and avian products and work closely with the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority officers to curb the smuggling of birds and avian products.

Raising the bar on bird flu control with biosecurity measures at poultry slaughterhouses

As part of the local control strategy, AVA has put in place a comprehensive series of measures at local poultry slaughterhouses to maintain Singapore's bird flu free status. AVA officers play a key role by conducting regular comprehensive surveillance programmes at the local poultry slaughterhouses and briefing the operators and their staff on identifying poultry that show signs and symptoms of bird flu. Slaughterhouse operators have also been advised to notify AVA when they see high mortality in poultry or any other signs that are suspicious of bird flu.

In addition, operators are required to observe the following bio-security measures at local poultry slaughterhouses:

- (1) Cleaning and disinfection of the entire poultry slaughterhouse premises at the end of each day's production. This ensures that the premises are free of manure, feathers and other debris that can potentially harbour bird flu viruses.
- (2) Cleaning and disinfection of all vehicles transporting live poultry (including the bird crates), as well as disinfection of the wheels and undercarriages of all other vehicles (e.g. reefer trucks) before entry into, and exit from, the slaughterhouse premises.
- (3) Limiting access into the slaughterhouse premises to only essential or authorised personnel and vehicles.
- (4) Operators and their staff are strongly advised against visiting poultry farms or other poultry slaughterhouses.
- (5) All workers in direct contact with live poultry are required to be properly fitted with personal protective equipment such as headgear, goggles, N95 facemasks, gloves and boots.
- (6) Operators have to ensure that a pest management programme is in place for their slaughterhouses.
- (7) Operators are required to monitor the health status of all their workers, provide their workers with an annual medical examination and vaccination against human influenza.

As part of AVA's regular surveillance measures, poultry that arrive at local poultry slaughterhouses are regularly tested for bird flu (amongst a range of other diseases). This is further enhanced when the threat of bird flu increases.

AVA also closely monitors the development of the bird flu disease situation in the region and has established close rapport with other veterinary authorities so that we can receive early warning of any potential bird flu threat to Singapore. This allows AVA to respond promptly and decisively to prevent any incursion of bird flu into Singapore.



AVA officer carefully scrutinising the documents accompanying live poultry



Worker disinfecting vehicle carrying poultry



Taking no chance with bird flu - worker fitted with personal protective equipment – headgear, goggles, N95 face mask and gloves



AVA officers collecting cloacal and tracheal swabs for bird flu testing



AVA's spectacular display at the Singapore Garden Festival

Set to be among the world's finest horticultural exhibitions and showcasing creations from international and local top award-winning landscape and garden designers, florists and horticulturists, the Singapore Garden Festival (SGF) was held from 16 to 25 December 2006 at the Suntec City Convention Centre. The National Park Board (Nparks) organised the SGF with key supporting partners, Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA), Singapore Tourism Board and Orchid Society of Southeast Asia.

AVA set up two impressive displays under the themes: Veggie Garden and Clinic Botanica.

Veggie Garden - DIY, home vegetable gardening

Picture this, a vegetable garden, right at your doorstep, complete with water features and wooden walk ways. Yes, when you combine a variety of interesting vegetables for your home gardening, it is possible to achieve a harmonious and attractive landscape for your home and serve a bountiful harvest at your table.

AVA's displays aimed to educate the public on home vegetable gardening and encourage home growing of vegetables. It showcased the new vegetable varieties that could be grown in tropical Singapore and highlighted their ornamental, aesthetic and home consumption values. A bountiful harvest comprising



Vegetable landscaping – palatable and ornamental



Produce from the garden – a variety of leafy and fruited vegetables and herbs

colourful gourds, corn, peppers and fruit vegetables served in the harvest cornucopia completed the display.

Clinic Botanica

The landscaping for Clinic Botanica was artfully done to simulate a lush and colourful garden. However, those with a keen eye for details quickly spotted the subtle blemishes captioned discreetly to describe the nature of plant health problems. Comprising three pavilions, Clinic Botanica showcased a key aspect of total plant-health care in each pavilion.

A variety of Singapore soils and a full breadth of the earth tone palette in bottles and placards were displayed at the Soil Management pavilion. Tips on differentiating fertilisers and identifying mineral deficiencies in garden plants were also offered to the visitors.

The public was treated to a rare glimpse of pure fungal cultures and the unusual blooms of viral-infected orchids at the Plant Pathology pavilion. Avid gardeners wasted no time in asking staff for tips to control and eradicate the selection of live bugs, beetles, caterpillars, and nematodes found at the Entomology and Nematology pavilion. A microscope attached to a display screen allowed visitors to take a closer look at the usually 'unseen' world of insects.

Many visitors, delighted by the colourful and educational displays, enquired on courses for growing vegetables and pest management. AVA is proud to have made an impact in helping to instil and enhance gardening culture and plant health interest in Singaporeans.



Exuberant AVA produce, a blend of healthy and vibrant colours



Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Minister for National Development, Mr Mah Bow Tan visiting our booths



Informative plant health exhibits



Looking at plant pests through the eyes of a microscope

A travellers' guide on bringing food into Singapore

Well-known for our passion for food and travelling, many Singaporeans have the 'habit' of bringing home foreign delicacies and tidbits to share with friends and relatives. This is especially so during festive seasons where good food is one of the highlights in many gatherings.

However, the restrictions on the types of food that can be brought into Singapore are unknown to many Singaporeans. The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA), national authority for

food safety, has imposed these restrictions to upkeep the high food safety standards in Singapore.

The food products and amounts that can be brought into Singapore from approved sources without an import permit from AVA are indicated in the table below. Travellers must be aware of the risks associated with consuming such food items, which have not undergone checks by AVA. Approved sources may change due to health and safety reasons.



For the latest listing, please visit the AVA website at www.ava.gov.sg.

When in doubt, please declare your food items to the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority officers.

	Types of Food	Countries from which the product may be brought in	Personal allowance
*Meat	* All forms of meat products (chilled, frozen, processed or canned, including cooked food containing meat)		A total of 5 kg per person of beef, mutton, pork and poultry
	Beef	Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Uruguay	
	Mutton	Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, New Zealand, Switzerland, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Uruguay, USA	
	Pork	Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, USA	
Seafood	Poultry	Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Switzerland, The Netherlands, USA	
	Fish products (except frozen cooked crabmeat, frozen cooked prawn meat and live or frozen oysters)	All countries	5 kg per person (provided that the total quantity of all seafood products does not exceed 5 kg per person)
	Live or frozen oysters	Australia, Canada, France, Ireland, New Zealand, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, USA	
Eggs	Frozen cooked crabmeat and frozen cooked prawn meat	All countries	2 kg per person (provided that the total quantity of all seafood products does not exceed 5 kg per person)
	Hen Eggs	Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Sweden, USA	Up to 30 eggs per person
Fruits and Vegetables	Fresh fruits and vegetables	All countries. However a phytosanitary certificate is required for fresh fruits and vegetables from the American Tropics (which includes Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Rep, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guyana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela, Virgin Islands)	Small, reasonable quantities hand carried for personal consumption
Processed Food	Processed food products (excluding meat and seafood products, fresh fruits and vegetables)	All countries	Total weight or volume does not exceed 5 kg/litres and the total value not more than S\$100 per person



Uncovering new grounds of produce at the Indonesian Vegetables and Fruits Fair 2006

The "Indonesian Vegetables and Fruits Fair 2006" was held at the Auction Hall of Pasir Panjang Wholesale Centre (PPWC) on 21 November 2006. Jointly organised by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia and the Agri-food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA), and supported by the Singapore Fruits & Vegetables Importers' & Exporters' Association (SFVIEA), the event showcased a wide range of vegetables and fruits from six provinces, namely Riau, KEPRI, Jambi, West Sumatra, West Java and East Java in Indonesia.

The PPWC, located in the western part of Singapore, was the ideal location for the exhibition. As the main distribution point for imported fruits and vegetables in Singapore, the wholesale centre is well-known for its large concentration of wholesalers in the vegetables, fruits and dried food trade, and is always abuzz with the hustle and bustle of its morning trading activities.

The day-long exhibition attracted many from the vegetables and fruits trade, members of the industry, as well as government and embassy officials. The exhibition provided a good platform for Singapore importers/exporters/retailers to network and meet the various Indonesian fruits and vegetable traders for potential business opportunities. A meeting was also held on the same day for the Indonesian delegation to discuss their trade interests with the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, AVA and SFVIEA. More than 30 Indonesian exhibitors (comprising of vegetable and fruit traders/farmers and government officials) attended the meeting which was followed by a guided tour of PPWC and a sumptuous welcome dinner hosted by SFVIEA.

Pleased that the event had successfully met its objective of acquainting traders with new and potential sources of produce from various provinces in Indonesia, the organisers plan to make this an annual event.



Officiating the event were Director of Food Supply & Technology, AVA, Mr Leslie Cheong, Counsellor (Economic), Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Singapore, Mr Irmawan Emir and Chairman, Singapore Fruits & Vegetables Importers' & Exporters' Association, Mr Tay Kham Back



Tasting the sweet produce from Kepri province

AVA hosts 11th International Veterinary Biosafety Workshop

The International Veterinary Biosafety Workgroup (IVBWG) which regularly meets at an 18-month interval held their 11th meeting in Singapore from 21 to 23 November 2006 at the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore's (AVA's) Animal and Plant Health Centre (APHC), in Lim Chu Kang.

Jointly organised by the IVBWG and AVA, the workshop brought together 65 participants, comprising veterinarians and scientists working in biosafety level 3 containment facilities, biosafety experts and containment architects and engineers, from 23 countries in USA, Europe, Asia and Australia.



Construction Handbook. Over 20 scientific papers and country reports covering topics pertaining to animal containment facility design and management, veterinary pathogen control and decontamination and management of fire threats were presented and discussed over the three days. The programme also included a visit to the APHC's BSL3 Lab and Animal Containment Facility.

A major highlight of the meeting was the launch of the IVBWG's Veterinary Containment Facilities Design and

The delegates thoroughly enjoyed the meeting, which provided an excellent forum for sharing of experiences and networking, as well as the social programme which included a welcome reception and a dinner cum visit to the Night Safari.

ATP helps Aceh rejuvenate prawn farming industry



The Agrifood Technologies Pte Ltd (ATP), a subsidiary consultancy company of the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA), was engaged by Network Indonesia to undertake an aquaculture reconstruction project for a fisheries school set up by the federal and provincial governments in Banda Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia. This project comprised the reconstruction of a model shrimp hatchery and grow-out ponds, and the provision of training on modern shrimp hatchery and production technology.



Room aplenty in these grow-out ponds for prawns to grow to marketable sizes



Aceh officer in consultation with AVA's Dr Kueh & Dr Ling on hatchery construction

The idea of a reconstruction project was conceived in mid 2005 following the devastating impacts of the Indian Ocean tsunami on the Aceh province. Funded by Network Indonesia, ATP conducted its exploratory mission on 18 July 2005 to identify possible aquaculture restoration projects. After consulting the provincial fisheries department (Dinas Kelautan dan Perikanan Aceh) and a local reconstruction agency (Badan Rehabilitation and Reconstruction), ATP identified the restoration of prawn production as a priority as Aceh used to be one of the top 5 producers of prawns in Indonesia, and restoration activities in this area had been minimal since the tsunami.



Beyond chalk-and-talk, Dr Kueh and Dr Ling engaging in fruitful interaction with participants



Reconstruction of model shrimp hatchery and grow-out ponds

Work for the reconstruction of a model shrimp hatchery and grow-out ponds commenced in February 2006. Targeted to be ready by February 2007, the model hatchery and ponds, complete with a laboratory, will provide the school with the necessary facilities to train students in prawn farming.

Training on appropriate modern shrimp hatchery and production technology

Apart from the reconstruction of the hatchery and ponds, training was provided to the trainers and students of the fisheries school. The training, which consisted of three modules, provided a comprehensive coverage on prawn hatchery and culture operations such as hatchery design; broodstock management; water quality management; biosecurity and biosanitation. The training which commenced in April 2006 was successfully completed in November 2006.

This aquaculture reconstruction project is expected to create a positive impact on the restoration of aquaculture in the Aceh province. ATP would like to express its appreciation to Network Indonesia for funding the project which would contribute to creating a sustainable means of livelihood for the Aceh community through the farming of prawns.

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