

AVAvision

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L-R: Prof Cham Tao Soon (Chancellor & Chairman, Board of Trustees, SIM University and President Emeritus, Nanyang Technological University), Mr Loy Wei Sun (Director, Corporate Services, AVA) and Mr Png Cheong Boon (Chief Executive, SPRING Singapore)

AVA Achieves Singapore Innovation Class (I-Class) and Renews People Developer (PD) Certification

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) received its I-Class plaque during the Business Excellence Plaque Presentation Ceremony on 17 November 2008. Awarded by SPRING Singapore, the I-Class status recognises organisations for their competencies in managing and sustaining innovation.

I-Class Certification, a Testament of AVA's Innovation Excellence

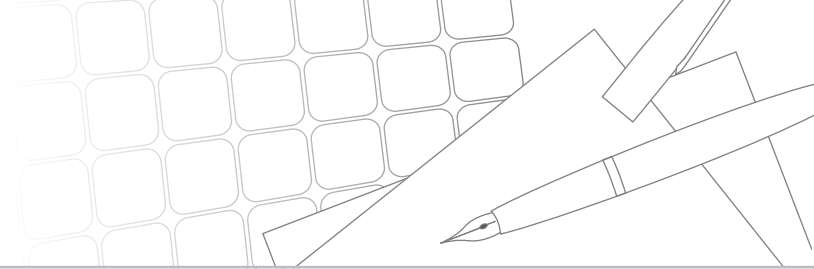
AVA's formal innovation programme started in 2002 with the set up of its

Innovation Committee, tasked to develop an innovative culture in the organisation. The challenge was to develop an innovative culture that permeates rank and file, extending innovation from conception to actual implementation of creative ideas that add value to the organisation in every day work. After completing a series of I-Class study visits to four organisations in 2007, the committee concluded that AVA was ready for the I-Class certification.

Continuation on page 2...



Corporate Cuts



AVA Achieves Singapore Innovation Class (I-Class) and Renews People Developer (PD) Certification

...Con't [Cover Story]

As some of assessment criteria were common in both I-Class and People Developer (PD) certification which was due for renewal, AVA embarked on an integrated assessment.

Gearing Up for the Assessment

Various activities were organised to better equip staff for the site assessment interviews which would be conducted during the assessment. PD/I-Class awareness messages were communicated during AVA's Annual Innovation Day (March 2008) and AVA Staff Conference (May 2008). We also leveraged on different

communication channels such as emails, on-site tutorials and collaterals to further reinforce the messages.

Towards Business Excellence

The site assessment, comprising a management presentation and staff interviews, was conducted by SPRING Singapore on 17 and 18 September 2008. News of its successful renewal for PD and certification for I-Class was received in October 2008. The attainment of the I-Class and PD certification are major milestones for AVA as it journeys towards Business Excellence.

AVA Receives President's Challenge Award 2008

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) was presented the President's Challenge Award 2008 on 27 November 2008 at the Istana. Representing AVA in receiving this prestigious award from President S. R. Nathan was Director, Food Supply & Technology, Mr Leslie Cheong. This award recognises organisations for their active participation and contributions towards the President's Challenge - an annual series of community-based activities initiated by the President since 2000. The spontaneous and generous contributions from AVA's staff have resulted in a contribution of \$2,377.00 towards the President's Challenge 2008.





MOU Establishes Platform for Closer Cooperation Between Singapore and Abu Dhabi in Food Safety and Control Areas



Officials at the MOU signing ceremony:

Back row (L-R): Dr Paul Chiew, Dr Chew Siang Thai, Ms Chua Yen Ling, Mr Alvin Lim and Dr Philip Chew

Front row (L-R): Dr Chua Sin Bin, Mr Alphonsus Chia, Mr Rashid Mohammed Khalfan Al Shariqi and Mr Saeed Ali Mohd Buataba Alzaabi

The Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority (ADFCA) on 9 January 2009 to cooperate in areas of food safety and control. The MOU was signed by Mr. Alphonsus Chia, Chief Executive Officer of SCE and Mr. Rashid Mohammed Khalfan Al Shariqi, Director General of ADFCA and witnessed by Dr Chua Sin Bin, CEO, Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA), and Mr Saeed Ali Mohd Buataba Alzaabi, Charge-d'Affairs (CDA) UAE Embassy.

Arising from this MOU, SCE will be working closely with AVA as well as other relevant government agencies to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise in areas like:

- Food Safety Training and Attachment Programmes;
- Food Safety and Inspection Systems for both imported and domestic food;
- Food Safety Policies & Legislation Development and Regulatory Affairs;
- Food Safety Laboratory Methodologies and Management Systems.



Signing of MOU by Mr Alphonsus Chia (CEO, SCE) and Mr. Rashid Mohammed Khalfan Al Shariqi (Director General, ADFCA) was witnessed by Dr Chua Sin Bin (CEO, AVA) and Mr. Saeed Ali Mohd Buataba Alzaabi (CDA A.I., UAE Embassy)



AVA's Efforts in Diversification of Food Sources for Meat and Meat Products

Prices of food have soared to historic levels in recent years due to a combination of inflation, supply disruption and growing demand. Being highly dependent on food imports, Singapore is not spared from the effect of global food price hikes.

In its quest to ensure a resilient supply of safe food and mitigate the impact of rising food prices, the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA), has been stepping up its efforts to diversify and approve new sources of food, countries and establishments that comply with Singapore's animal health and food safety requirements.

Accrediting Overseas Slaughterhouses and Meat Processing Establishments

As Singapore does not have a livestock industry producing animals for meat, AVA is working closely with competent authorities in various countries such as Mexico, Poland, Turkey, Panama, Brunei and Malaysia (Sabah) to accredit their slaughterhouses and meat processing establishments for export to Singapore. This accreditation process includes an assessment of the country's veterinary services, legislations, animal disease status and control measures, national residue and microbiological monitoring programmes, and the regulatory system pertaining to the production of meat and processed meat products for export. This is undertaken to ensure that only countries with adequate regulatory control systems in place are allowed to export to Singapore.

Risk Management Approach for Gourmet Meat Imports

In addition, AVA adopts a risk management approach when approving the import of gourmet meat products to Singapore as some of them may present a greater public health risk. An example of this is the approval of dry cured (uncooked) Iberian and Serrano ham from Spain where AVA identified the hazards associated with the product and applied risk management and mitigation measures, as appropriate, to ensure that the products met all our animal

health and food safety requirements. The application of risk management in AVA's accreditation process has helped to further diversify Singapore's food sources without compromising food safety. This is in line with established international practice.

To date, a total of 30 countries have been approved by AVA to export meat and processed meat products to Singapore.

Encouraging Local Companies to Invest in Approved Overseas Meat Production Establishments

As part of the national strategy to diversify our food supply in order to stabilise local food prices, AVA encourages and engages various local food companies to invest in meat production in approved countries for supply to the Singapore market. AVA also works closely with stakeholders such as the meat importers, supermarkets and the hospitality industry in exploring new potential sources.

AVA will continue in its efforts to explore and identify new sources of safe and wholesome foods so that consumers can have access to a greater variety of safe food products at competitive prices.



AVA's continuous efforts in approving and accrediting new food sources help the nation enjoy a resilient food supply



AVA, MFA Officers and Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Visit Major Vegetables Exporter in North Sumatra



Four officers from the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs accompanied Singapore's Senior Minister Of State (MOS) for Foreign Affairs, Mr Zainul Abidin Rasheed on a visit to PT Horti Jaya Lestari, a major exporter of vegetables from North Sumatra on 9 December 2008.

Horti Jaya's two-hectare factory area in Karo Regency handles frozen vegetable processing for the Japan market and fresh vegetables packaging for the Singapore market. Senior MOS was impressed with the processing center, production area set-up as well as its operation and capacity to meet the Japan market.

The delegation observed the processing and packaging of a range of vegetables destined for the Singapore market and was assured by the good postharvest processes, traceability system for food safety, good agronomic practices as well as the cold chain management that have been put in place for the export of vegetables to Singapore.

The delegation also visited the semi-automated greenhouses at one of the seven farms belonging to Hortijaya in Brastagi, Karo Regency. The farms cultivating leafy vegetables and fruited vegetables are located at about 1,400 m above sea level.

Horti Jaya plans to increase its exports to Singapore. Currently, Horti Jaya exports three containers of vegetables to Singapore each week, and is looking at doubling the volume and shipments to Singapore once logistic issues are resolved.

Senior MOS expressed his support for the export of vegetables from North Sumatra during the courtesy call to the Governor, H Syamsul Arifin of North Sumatra on 10 December 2008.



Field trip to the processing centre and greenhouses



Fair Hypes Up Awareness and Demand for Indonesia's Fresh Produce

Jointly organised by the NTUC FairPrice and the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, and supported by the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA), the Indonesian Vegetables and Fruits Fair was held from 13 to 19 November 2008 at NTUC's two major retail outlets: the Ang Mo Kio Hub Hypermarket and Hougang Mall. Fresh Indonesian produce were also available for sampling and purchase at another 40 retail outlets during the same period.

AVA officers and the management staff from NTUC FairPrice accompanied Indonesia's Ambassador to Singapore, His Excellency, Mr Wardana during his visit to the fair. The fair helped to raise local consumers' awareness on the types of produce available, thereby creating a demand for them. This effort is part of AVA's strategy for diversification of vegetable supply for Singapore.

Fresh produce from various regencies and provinces of Indonesia, such as Bandung and Bogor of West Java, Medan of North Sumatra, Bintan of Kepri and Surabaya of East Java were showcased during the fair. The supermarket indicated that the fair was a great success with the increase in sale of Indonesian produce and consumers coming back for more. In response to this, plans are made to organise a larger scale Indonesian



Indonesian fresh produce generated much interest and demand among shoppers

Vegetables and Fruits Fair in August 2009. This time, all the retail outlets will be involved with Indonesian exporters bringing in greater varieties of vegetables and fruits. AVA and the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia look forward to organising similar fairs at other major supermarket chains.



Officers accompanying HE Mr Wardana during his visit to the fair



AVA's Risk Management Approach Facilitates Horse Imports during Australia's Equine Influenza Outbreak

Singapore is free from Equine Influenza (EI), a highly contagious viral disease that affects horses but not humans. To ensure that this disease is not introduced here, the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA), Singapore's national authority for safeguarding animal health, requires all imported horses to come from EI-free premises.

Risk Management Approach Facilitates Resumption of Australian Horse Imports

In August 2007, the horse industry in Australia was rocked by outbreaks of EI. This disease had never previously been recorded in Australia, one of only two countries historically free from EI without the need for vaccination. The outbreak spread rapidly among the highly naive and vulnerable horse population. During the peak of the epidemic in October 2008, thousands of premises and horses in the states of New South Wales and Queensland in Australia were affected.

A sizeable majority of horses in Singapore originate from Australia. Following the first reports of the outbreak, AVA immediately stopped the import of horses from Australia. Subsequently, AVA began drawing risk management measures to enable the resumption of Australian horse imports without compromising the health status of Singapore's horse population.

After conducting a careful scientific assessment of the situation, AVA formulated a risk-based approach to facilitate resumption of imports. Following consultations with the Veterinary Department of the Singapore Turf Club (STC) and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Services (AQIS), AVA came up with specific interim import requirements for Australian horses which included:

Minimising the risk at source through pre-export quarantine (PEQ) and testing of the horses twice for EI at 10-14 days apart during PEQ.

Mitigating potential risk upon import through post-arrival quarantine (PAQ) and another round of testing for EI. A contingency plan was also worked out between AVA and STC, which operates the Singapore Equine Quarantine Station for imported horses.

On 12 March 2008, AVA and AQIS officially agreed on the interim import requirements for Australian horses that are



imported on a permanent basis into Singapore, allowing the backlog of horses from Australia to resume import.

14 April 2008 saw the official agreement between AVA and AQIS on the interim import requirements for Australian horses imported temporarily into Singapore for races. Thus making way for the successful entries of Australian horses into the annual Singapore Airlines International Cup in May 2008.

Australia has recently declared itself free from EI in accordance with the guidelines of the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE). AVA has also allowed resumption of horse imports from Australia under the general import requirements.

Swift action at the alert of disease outbreak, open and transparent cooperation with overseas authority, close consultation with the industry, and the adoption of a science-based risk management approach have helped AVA protect the health of the local horse population and concurrently facilitate the import of Australian horses.



New Dog Farm Licence Conditions Safeguard Animal Welfare and Prevent Cruelty

Dog farms are also known as “puppy mills” in some countries. This reference is often made to callous and irresponsible farm owners who breed dogs for profit with no regard for their well-being. As puppy mills are usually not regulated, poor animal welfare standards, and in many cases, animal cruelty may occur.

In Singapore, dog farms that breed puppies are licensed by the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) and are required to comply with farm licence conditions for animal health and welfare. However, AVA does receive occasional complaints on farms selling unhealthy puppies, as well as the poor housing standards and management of the breeding dogs and puppies. To further safeguard the health and welfare of these animals, AVA introduced additional farm licensing conditions for dog breeding and sale of puppies on 1 January 2009.

Housing Conditions

Apart from specifying that proper housing of adequate size must be provided for different sizes of dogs, the new conditions also require all dogs to be provided with adequate shade and shelter. The areas where the dogs are kept must be well ventilated, clean and dry. Dogs must also be supplied with clean drinking water at all times and given secure areas to exercise.

Breeding Conditions

New conditions for dog breeding have also been introduced. These include standards for cages and pens so that all breeding dogs would have adequate space to stand comfortably. Cages that are stacked are required to be secured to a frame or the wall. Furthermore, waste and wastewater must not spill to the cages below. Floor mats covering at least half the floor area must be provided for all cages and pens with wire flooring.

Farms are also required to practise responsible breeding. Bitches that are above six years of age, sick, diseased, have genetic defects or undergone two caesareans are prohibited from breeding.

Sale of Puppies

AVA has introduced conditions for sale of puppies that are similar to those implemented for pet shops. Puppies sold must have received at least two appropriate vaccinations against canine distemper, parvovirus and infectious hepatitis. The first vaccination must not be given before six weeks of age, and appropriate interval must be observed between the 1st and 2nd vaccination. The puppy should only be sold two weeks after the second vaccination.

All puppies displayed for sale must be in healthy and good condition. The puppies must neither have intestinal parasites, external parasites and ringworm nor harbour any infectious viral disease. Imported puppies are required to be rested at least 72 hours before sale.

Farms are required to provide customers with accurate information of the puppy and appropriate information on puppy care. These include what must be done within the first 72 hours when the puppy is brought home, the type and amount of food to give, the appropriate amount of exercise to provide and how to house-train the puppy.

Disease Control

For purposes of rabies control, the farms must ensure that all their dogs are either individually-licensed for boarding dogs, or group-licensed for breeding dogs. Proper records of the details of the dogs and their owners must be kept and maintained. Farms are required to submit to AVA a dog licence application for each puppy sold as well as their puppy sales data for each month.

The farms must have a healthcare and disease prevention programme that covers vaccination, de-worming, control of external and internal parasites; diet and nutrition; and veterinary treatment and follow up. Farms are also required to have a licensed veterinarian to advise on healthcare and disease prevention.





AVA Facilitates Movement of Plants Into Singapore

Some 11 million trees and shrubs are grown on the island of Singapore. This is a result of the conscious effort by our Government to keep Singapore clean, green and beautiful. Apart from breaking the monotony of highways and bridges, the introduced flora also adds colour and vibrancy to our concrete jungle and are spectacular displays and exhibits in the Botanic Gardens and at special events such as the Singapore Garden Festival.

Stringent Measures Safeguard Singapore's Plant Health

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) contributes to this important effort by ensuring that our imported plants are free from major exotic plant diseases and pests of quarantine importance. The plants' health status must be certified at source before they are allowed entry to Singapore. This certification is in accordance to the health requirements stipulated by AVA.

Apart from ensuring that all requirements are fully complied with before plants are allowed to be imported, AVA also performs document checks (phytosanitary certificates; CITES permits, where applicable; invoices; Bills of lading, etc) on the plant consignments. Approval is only granted after verifying that all information and document(s) provided are true and accurate.

After customs clearance, AVA officers will follow up with checks at the nurseries and look out for signs of live pests or infestations. Random samples would also be taken for laboratory analysis and confirmation of health status.

Facilitating Smooth Transits During Key Shows and Events

During major events such as the Singapore Garden Festival/Orchid Show, AVA works closely with the event organiser to facilitate the movement of plants into the country through special arrangements.

Post-entry inspections of plants are conducted at a designated site and pest control operators are available on call to provide chemical treatment services when necessary. This reduces the turnaround time for plants to be sent to the exhibition site and helps ensure that the international participants receive their plants for setup purposes in the shortest time possible. Individuals who brought their prized orchids for the Orchid Show also had their needs catered to. Inspection times were specially scheduled to coincide with their arrival times.

AVA cleared 39 consignments, totaling 46,061 plants during the 2008 Singapore Garden Festival period. The normal load would have been about 20,000 plants over the same period. Plant health officers were also present during the show to inspect the plants and issue phytosanitary certificates and/or CITES permits for participants and visitors who wish to bring the plants back to their home country.

Keeping Our Garden City Blooming

The years of efforts in planting and keeping the environment green is one key ingredient in making Singapore one of the most conducive and desirable cities in the world to live in. Monitoring of plant movements ensure that plant health of our floras are not compromised. It is this balance between aesthetic and regulation that makes the Garden City, such a beauty today.





Plant Picks

AVA's Green Booth, a Draw at the Tree Planting Day cum Fruit Carnival 2008



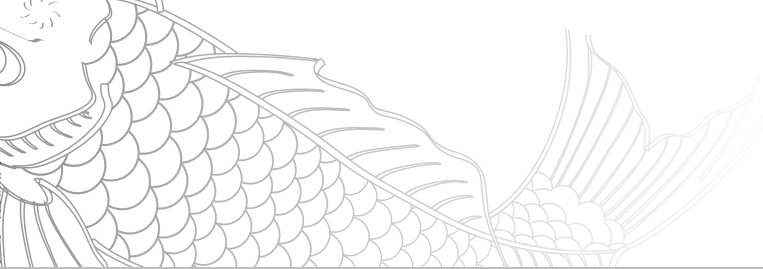
The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) participated in the Tree Planting Day cum Fruit Carnival 2008 on 2 November 2008. Organised by the Ang Mo Kio-Yio Chu Kang Town Council and officiated by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, this event commemorated the opening of the Sengkang Riverside.

Government agencies such as AVA, Public Utilities Board and National Environment Agency, together with various schools and town councils, exhibited their environmental protection projects and community garden displays at the event.

AVA's display of popular leafy vegetables in garden racks and plant clinic proved to be a hit among the participants. The display showcased vegetables that could be easily grown within Singapore homes for consumption and also promoted the use of vegetables for landscaping. The AVA booth was abuzz throughout the day with queries from the public on how to grow the greens. AVA's 'Plant Doctors' were also kept busy answering questions on the signs and symptoms of plant pests and diseases, and how to keep their plants healthy.



PM Lee and visitors enquiring at the AVA booth



Modern Shrimp Hatchery Management Training Revitalises Aceh Shrimp Industry



Students interacting with and listening attentively to AVA's instructor, Dr Diana Chee

The Agrifood Technologies Pte Ltd (ATP), a subsidiary consultancy company of the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) has recently completed its second round of training on modern shrimp hatchery management for a federal cum provincial government fisheries school in Banda Aceh Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia. This training, sponsored by Network Indonesia, is one of the post-tsunami reconstruction assistance provided by Singapore to Indonesia. Since its commencement in February 2006, ATP has successfully completed two rounds of training and reconstructed a model shrimp hatchery, and grow-out ponds.

Training Highly Popular Among Teachers and Students

The training has been well-received by both teachers and students of the school. Since the start of the project, the fisheries school has seen a 70% increase in student enrolment between 2005 and 2008.

The 3-module training provided a comprehensive coverage on prawn hatchery and culture operations such as hatchery design; broodstock management; water quality management; biosecurity and biosanitation. Useful practical training sessions were also conducted at the model shrimp hatchery and grow-out ponds.



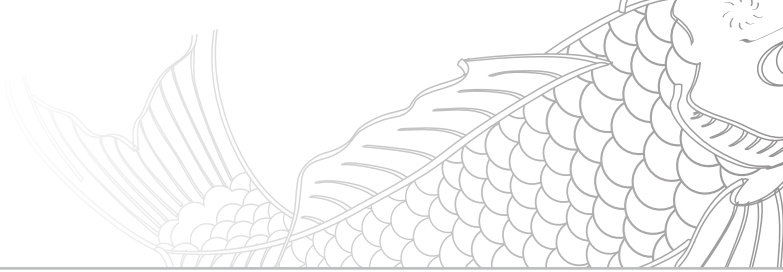
Aceh Fisheries School's trainers and students

Aceh's Aquaculture Industry Reaps Benefits of Training

This project has contributed significantly to the restoration of aquaculture in the Aceh Province. Many graduates of the school are either currently engaged in aquaculture work in Aceh or have gone on to pursue tertiary studies in similar areas. Furthermore, apart from producing shrimp post-larvae for the fisheries school's curriculum, the model shrimp hatchery has also been producing and supplying shrimp post-larvae to surrounding shrimp aquaculture farms under an Indonesian national aquaculture programme.



Fishy Business



Application Now Open for Advanced Ornamental Fish Course

The Agrifood Technologies Pte Ltd (ATP), a subsidiary consultancy company of the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA), is preparing to roll-out its first Advanced Ornamental Fish Culture & Export Training Course for the Singapore ornamental fish industry in mid 2009. This course will be organised in close collaboration with the Ornamental Fish Business Cluster (OFBC) and supported by AVA.

The Advanced Ornamental Fish Culture & Export Training Course is an extension of the Basic Ornamental Fish Culture & Export training course that ATP has been organising annually since 2005. Continuous demand and good response from industry for such upgrading courses have led to the development of this new course. This course marks yet another milestone and progress in OFBC's continuous effort to establish a structured and formal training programme to upgrade the standards of the ornamental fish industry in Singapore.

Participants can look forward to learn more on the following topics in this advanced course:

- Diagnostic Techniques for fish disease (Level I & II)
- Health management of farm
- Impact and growing importance of transboundary aquatic animal diseases and new regulations on import of live fish by major importing countries such as the EU
- Methodologies and types of hormones used for induced breeding
- Tank design, planting and decoration
- Study on the centralised modular system on specific fish species with main focus on the water quality aspects
- International organisation for standardisation (ISO)

Interested applicants can contact Mr Foo Siang Ming at foo_siang_ming@ava.gov.sg or 6325 7654 for more information.

AVA Trains Local Aquaculture Company

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) was engaged by a local aquaculture company to provide consultancy services for the establishment of a marine finfish hatchery facility. The scope of service included a five-day training course on seabass hatchery technology and technical audit services.

Conducted from 17 to 21 November 2008, the training covered: broodstock management, live-feeds production, hatchery aspects of seabass fry production, water quality management, and fish health management. Participants sat through a series of lectures and were also given hands-on training for the familiarisation of hatchery routines.

The consultancy services will equip the company in their plans to develop a nursery facility and produce a large and consistent supply of quality seabass fry for their industrial-scale fish farming operation in local waters, off Pulau Semakau/Senang.



Practical session in microalgae culture

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