

MEDIA RELEASE

STRENGTHENING SINGAPORE'S FOOD SECURITY THROUGH SUSTAINABLE AND PRODUCTIVE AQUACULTURE

Singapore, 7 March 2022 – The Singapore Food Agency (SFA) is committed to building the capability and capacity of our agri-food industry. We will continue to support our farmers to increase productivity, while ensuring that local production remains climate-resilient and resource-efficient. SFA will do so through various means such as facilitating long-term investments to increase production, encouraging demand for local produce, and providing funding support.

2 Fish is a commonly consumed source of protein that can be grown locally in a productive and sustainable manner. Singapore's farms play an important role in strengthening our food security as local production mitigates our reliance on imports and serves as a buffer during supply disruptions from import sources, an increasing concern amid climate change. SFA will support sea-based farms to invest in their future.

3 SFA plans to uplift the local aquaculture industry through our Singapore Aquaculture Plan. Strategies include:

- Unlocking new spaces through new sea space tenders and longer leases;
- Supporting the aquaculture sector to transform into one that is highly productive, climate-resilient and resource-efficient through the use of technology and adopting appropriate farm management methods, including conducting environmental surveys and water and seabed quality surveys to better inform farm management;
- Supporting research and innovation for sustainable tropical marine aquaculture through leveraging on SFA's Marine Aquaculture Centre.

Tendering new sites with leases

4 New sea space tenders in the Southern Waters and East Johor Straits will be progressively launched from end-2022 on a 20+10 year¹ duration to provide certainty on the tenure and facilitate long-term planning and investments.

5 Existing farmers will also have better assurance to make longer-term investments and ensure that the use of sea space is accounted for with the introduction of temporary occupation licences (TOL) from 1 January 2023.

6 An annual TOL rate of \$3,600 per half hectare in the Straits of Johor and \$6,000 per half hectare in the Southern Waters will apply from 2023. The valuation of sea-based farms takes into account factors such as locational attributes. Farms are to pay 20% in the first year, but this will be waived in line with the Government's commitment to not increase Government fees and charges for 2023, and to mitigate the cost impact on the farmers. The payment will be phased over four years, reaching the full amount in 2026.

Review of fee for fish farm licence

¹ New sea spaces will have a 20-year lease, with an option to extend another 10 years.

7 SFA has reviewed the fish farm licence fees to ensure that it remains relevant and that compliance costs for the industry are minimised. From 1 January 2023, most sea-based farmers will see a substantial reduction in their annual licence fees to \$145 per licence. It is currently \$850 per half hectare. New farm applications and farms with major changes to their farming activities will be subject to a one-off assessment fee.

Strengthening Singapore's food security is a whole-of-nation effort and everyone has a part to play

8 Since early 2021, SFA has been engaging sea-based farms on farming management methods and measures to facilitate the adoption of more sustainable practices in support of higher production. These include monitoring the impact of aquaculture activities, measures to prevent and control the spread of fish diseases, and the use of better feed. This will also help sea-based fish farms enhance their business resilience by improving the yield and survival rate of fish and ensuring that our surrounding waters are not degraded over time. In turn, we can improve the productivity of our sea spaces.

9 SFA will continue to work with farmers to develop the potential of Singapore's aquaculture industry by transforming it to become more productive and sustainable.

10 Demand from consumers is also key to sustaining a healthy and vibrant agri-food ecosystem. Supporting local produce will support our local farmers and spur them to improve productivity to meet the increased demand and adopt sustainable farming practices. This will, in turn, contribute to strengthening our food security.

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