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UVAXX develops first vaccine to protect barramundi from Scale Drop Disease Virus

29 July 2024

By Responsible Seafood Advocate

New vaccine for Scale Drop Disease Virus represents a promising breakthrough

UVAXX has successfully developed the first vaccine to protect barramundi, also called Asian sea bass, from the Scale Drop Disease Virus (SDDV).

SDDV has led to severe losses for fish farmers, particularly in Southeast Asia. This virus makes fish lose their scales, develop skin lesions and can cause high death rates, sometimes up to 70 percent among both young and adult fish. UVAXX, a subsidiary of Barramundi Group and the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR), says the new vaccine could be a “game-changer” for the industry.

“Through our 12 years of experience working with farmers to provide veterinary services and fish health solutions, we have witnessed the severity and devastation caused by SDDV,” wrote representatives in a [LinkedIn post \(https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7220080523723857921/\)](https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7220080523723857921/). “Until today, there are no commercially available solutions. We are proud to be on track to be the first to bring



UVAXX has successfully developed the first vaccine to protect barramundi, also called Asian sea bass, from Scale Drop Disease Virus (SDDV). Photo by Pixabay (<https://www.pexels.com/photo/close-up-of-microscope-256262/>).

the solution to market.”

The vaccine is designed to protect fish from SDDV by using specific virus components, called epitopes, that stimulate the fish’s immune system. This approach is intended to boost the fish’s natural defenses against the virus.

(<https://bspcertification.org/>).

“Derived from pathogen proteins, the epitopes are the targets of specific arm of the immune system such as antibodies that neutralize viral particles, and killer cells to directly eliminate infected cells and regulate the immune responses,” said Professor Renia Laurent Claude Stéphane, A*STAR senior fellow

in a press release. “In many ways, this epitope-based vaccine design is novel for the aquaculture sector and we are energized and committed to identify more use cases of this technology together with UVAXX.”

UVAXX reports that the vaccine has a 75 percent effectiveness rate and will be incorporated into standard practices at hatcheries and fish farms. With no existing commercial solutions for SDDV, the team at UVAXX and A*STAR is set to be the first to offer this new remedy.

“Efficacious vaccines remain the most critical tool for enabling a paradigm shift in aquaculture disease management from a reactive to a preventative approach and transforming farm production unit economics,” wrote representatives on LinkedIn.

Before taking the vaccine to market, the next phase is to run large-scale field trials with local farms, evaluate the vaccine’s safety and effectiveness, set up the manufacturing process and obtain regulatory approval.

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