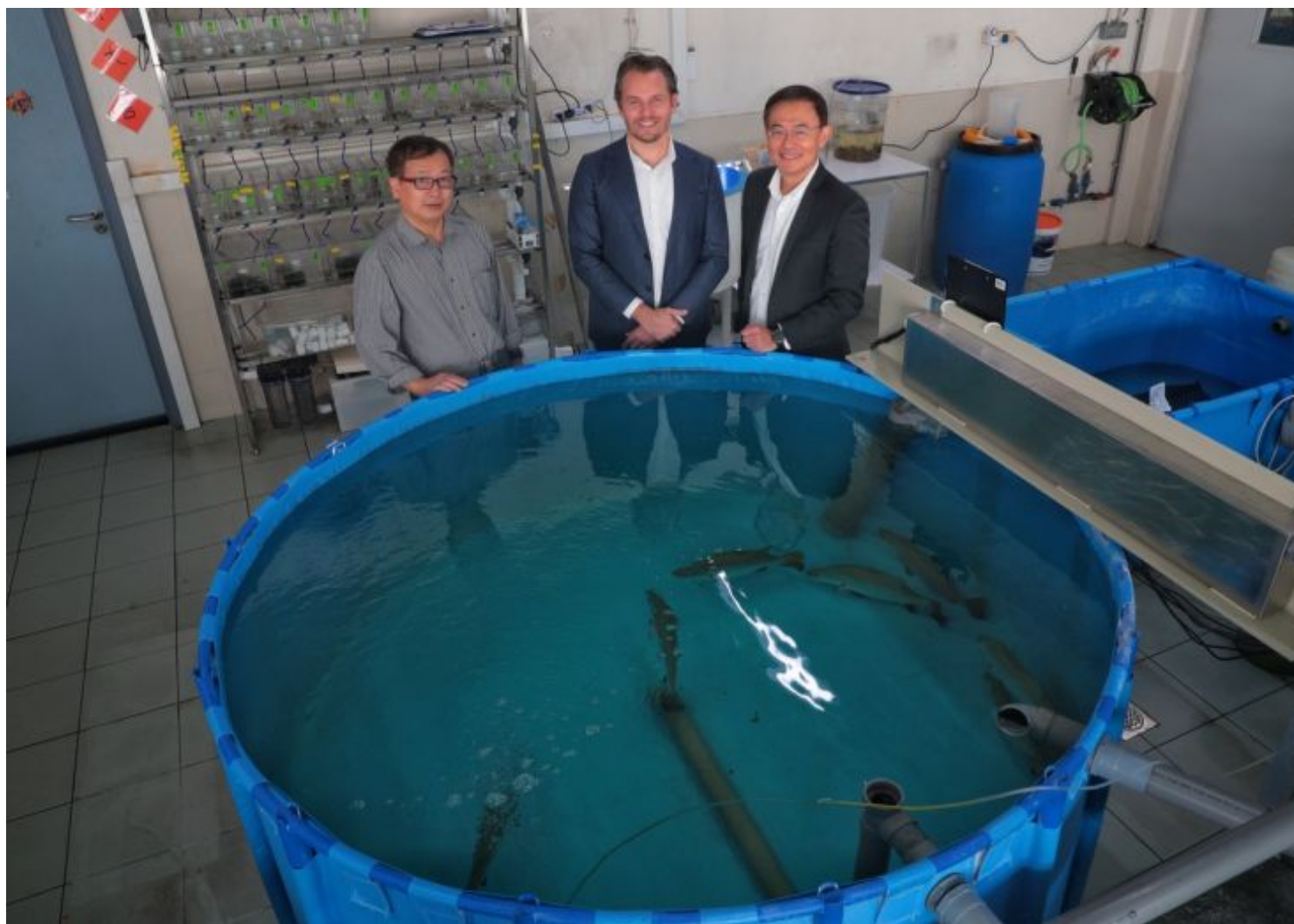


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(From left) Dr Yue Genhua, senior principal investigator and programme director at Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory; Mr Andreas von Scholten, CEO of Barramundi Asia; and Mr Peter Chia, CEO of Allegro Aqua and Temasek Life Sciences Accelerator, pose next to a pool of Asian sea bass on Jan 17, 2020. ST PHOTO: JASON QUAH

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SINGAPORE - They grow 30 per cent faster, are stouter and less prone to diseases.

Through a selective breeding programme based on molecular markers, local start-up Allegro Aqua bred "premium" Asian sea bass in a controlled environment. They were bred from superior brood stocks with specific desirable genetic traits.

The company has now set its sights on doing the same for barramundi.

The start-up was established in 2018 to scale up the production of a higher quality strain of the Asian sea bass after scientists from the Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory (TLL) succeeded in breeding superior fingerlings with the support of the former Agri-food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore and the National Research Foundation.

Local farm Barramundi Asia on Wednesday (Jan 22) joined hands with Allegro Aqua to grow stronger barramundi at faster rates too.

The merger of the two companies, which was announced in a joint press release, is expected to not only help Barramundi Asia produce more fish but also reduce the mortality rate of its stocks using technology developed by Allegro Aqua.

The merger was also aimed at strengthening fish production and better meet the food security needs of Singapore and the region, added the companies.

Mr Andrew Kwan, director at Barramundi Asia, said that the firm also has plans to supply superior, vaccinated barramundi fingerlings to other fish farms in Singapore, coupled with a guaranteed buy-back programme when the fish are ready for harvest.

"To this end, farmers who opt-in on this scheme will follow a strict prescribed feeding programme and adhere to the international standards of husbandry practices adopted by Barramundi Asia because it will be a branded product," said Mr Kwan.



Through a selective breeding programme based on molecular markers, local start-up Allegro Aqua bred "premium" Asian sea bass in a controlled environment. ST PHOTO: JASON QUAH

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**Local barramundi farm scales up with \$2 million nursery extension**

- Mr Peter Chia, chief executive officer of Allegro Aqua and Temasek Life Sciences Accelerator, said: "This merger reflects our belief that Singapore has the ability to put together and build a robust aquaculture ecosystem, with innovation, trans-disciplinary capabilities and global market access being important pillars of that vision."

He added that he hoped the merger would enhance Singapore's and Asia's food security and nutritional needs over the next few years.