

Malaysian shrimp farmer perseveres despite new white spot outbreak



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SERI KEMBANGAN, Malaysia — Malaysian shrimp producer Blue Archipelago is persevering in the face of a pathogen-hit South East Asian shrimp industry, a new outbreak of disease locally and prices that are lower than they were a year ago.

The company, owned by Malaysian sovereign wealth fund Khazanah Nasional, will likely miss a projected production target of 5,000 metric tons this year as one of the farms it operates, in Setiu, has been recently hit with white spot disease, Ronnie Tan, vice president for corporate strategy and marketing, told *Undercurrent News*.

At the same time, the other farm it operates, in Kedah, continues to deal with early mortality syndrome, like [many shrimp farms in Asia](#), as well as Mexico.

So this year the company will probably produce around 4,000t, well off target but still up from last year's 3,800t production, Tan said on the sidelines of a [tilapia industry gathering here last week](#).

Meantime, the company is seeing prices for the head-on-shell-on shrimp it sells to Europe, Japan and New Zealand around \$6.20 per kilogram including the premium the company gets for its shrimp's traceability.

That's down about 10% from a year ago as certain countries that haven't been hit by EMS have been producing more, demand has been slowing and buyers have been waiting for lower prices, he said.

Blue Archipelago hasn't been the only shrimp farmer in Malaysia hit by white spot in addition to EMS.

In a November note, brokerage Bualuang Securities said [the Malaysian shrimp unit of Charoen Pokphand Foods was suffering from white spot](#) even as it was recovering from early mortality syndrome.

But the industry should not give up on shrimp because of disease, he said.

Managing white spot includes monitoring potential trigger points like temperature change and post-larvae strength levels as well as assessing biosecurity and monitoring the weather, Tan said.

Measures that could be taken to fight EMS could include importing brood stock that are more genetically robust, such as from Ecuador, he said.

The Malaysian shrimp industry will recover to pre-EMS levels, but a timeline is unclear, he said.

Locally, EMS led to a decrease in shrimp processing capacity, but there will come a day when production will increase again and processing capacity will need to increase, he said.