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1 **Assessment of the efficacy of prophylactic health products on water quality and shrimp**
2 **(*Penaeus monodon*) performance at the nursery phase**

3

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16 **Running title:** Efficacy of prophylactic health products on shrimp

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25 **Assessment of the efficacy of prophylactic health products on water quality and shrimp**
26 **(*Penaeus monodon*) performance at the nursery phase**

27 **Abstract**

28 The aim was to assess the efficacy of prophylactic health products (PHPs) on shrimp (*Penaeus*
29 *monodon*) post larvae (PL) during the nursery phase. This included five treatments: in-feed
30 probiotic (F_PRO), water probiotic (W_PRO), a combination of water and in-feed probiotic
31 (FW_SYN), biofloc, a combination of biofloc and in-feed probiotic (F_PRO& biofloc), and a
32 no treatment control, five replicates each. Each tank was filled with 450 liter water and stocked
33 with 700 PL15, weight 0.008 ± 0.00 g at a density of 1.56 PL/L, reared for 27 days. There were
34 no significant differences in water temperature, dissolved oxygen, alkalinity, and total
35 ammonia nitrogen among treatments and control. pH and nitrite were lower in biofloc and
36 F_PRO&biofloc compared to other treatments. The final body weight, weight gain, specific
37 growth rate and food conversion ratio were significantly higher ($p \leq 0.05$) in F_PRO& biofloc
38 compared to other treatments and control. A salinity stress test showed a significantly higher
39 survival rate in F_PRO& biofloc followed by biofloc than other treatments and control. Our
40 study indicated that rearing shrimp in biofloc alone or combined with in-feed probiotic might
41 increase growth and resistance to environmental stressors. Further on-farm trials are required
42 to confirm the efficacy of the PHPs.

43 **Key words:** Probiotics, Biofloc, *Penaeus monodon*, Nursing, Bangladesh

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49 **1. Introduction**

50 Declining capture fisheries and growing domestic and international demand for seafood is
51 driving intensification of smallholder aquaculture throughout much of Asia and Africa. A need
52 to optimise returns from small production units makes small-scale aquaculturists particularly
53 vulnerable to changes in input costs and efficiencies and a receptive audience for independent
54 advice. Most critically, this intensification brings serious health management challenges for
55 smallholders with limited diagnostic capacity. Consequently, they resort to prophylactic
56 treatments, including probiotics, prebiotics and immunomodulators, of uncertain provenance
57 and efficacy also raising environmental, animal and consumer health and safety concerns (Rico
58 et al., 2012; Rico et al., 2013). Here, these are referred to as prophylactic health products
59 (PHPs).

60 Bangladesh is one of the most suitable countries for aquaculture production because of its
61 favorable biophysical resources and agro-climatic conditions (Ahmed, 2013). In which the
62 coastal aquaculture is dominated by black tiger shrimp (*Penaeus monodon*) farming. Rapidly
63 growing domestic and export market demand for seafood products are driving intensification
64 of aquaculture, led by smallholder farmers (Henriksson et al., 2018; Little et al., 2018). This
65 intensification brings serious health management challenges, particularly for smallholders (Ali
66 et al., 2016; Ali et al., 2018) and restrictions on antibiotic use are being imposed (Bondad-
67 Reantaso et al., 2005). Over the last few years, farmers in Bangladesh like other places have
68 become heavily dependent on a proliferating range of PHPs.

69 Probiotics are the most widely used PHPs in aquaculture for disease prevention, particularly
70 bacterial diseases via competitive exclusion and immunomodulation (Hai, 2015; Hoseinifar et
71 al., 2018). Probiotics are also considered an environmentally safe alternative compared to the
72 prophylactic use of antibiotics. Previous studies showed that PHPs could play an important role
73 in maintaining water quality, soil quality and health as well as increasing the growth and

74 survival rate of shrimp (Decamp et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2008). However, the provenance and
75 efficacy of PHPs is often uncertain and the economic burden of unjustified claims is likely to
76 fall most heavily on smallholders (Ali et al., 2016). Therefore, the effectiveness of such
77 products should be assessed in order to guide the farmers on which PHPs to be used and at
78 what stage of the production cycle. Furthermore, there are no regulatory frameworks, and
79 consequently no quality assurance, for the production and marketing of these products. The
80 lack of knowledge about the effectiveness of such products in aquaculture particularly by
81 smallholder farmers is a limiting factor for the appropriate use (Ali et al., 2018).

82 The biofloc system is a revolution in aquaculture; it exploits the proliferation of beneficial
83 microorganisms to maintain water quality and provide better nutrition to cultured organisms
84 (Emerenciano et al., 2017). Biofloc stimulates heterotrophic microbial growth that assimilates
85 nitrogenous waste that can be utilized as a feed for the cultured aquatic organisms (De Schryver
86 et al., 2008). It also keeps nitrogenous waste below toxic levels and improves the feed nutrient
87 utilization efficiency (Crab et al., 2009), and provides extra essential nutrients (Xu et al., 2012)
88 and exogenous digestive enzymes (Xu and Pan, 2012). The application of biofloc has
89 significantly increased the survival and growth of pink shrimp post larvae production
90 (Emerenciano et al., 2011). Microorganisms developed in biofloc system provide protection
91 against infection via competition with pathogenic organisms (Crab et al., 2010; Emerenciano
92 et al., 2017).

93 A systematic surveys of shrimp grow-out farms, hatcheries and aqua shops found over 200
94 PHPs in Bangladesh (IMAQulate project, unpublished data). Although some proprietary and
95 academic studies have been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of PHPs on the culture of
96 aquatic organisms, the efficacy of their application at shrimp juvenile stage is not fully
97 understood. In this study, the juvenile production stage was identified as a key intervention
98 point because: i) there is a high mortality rate at the juvenile production stage, ii) poor quality

99 juveniles are likely to compromise grow-out performance, iii) the cost of application of PHPs
100 at juvenile production stage is lower at the juvenile production stage compared to grow-out
101 phases, and iv) there is a growing trend of extended nursing of shrimp juveniles from 3 to 4
102 weeks in more biosecure lined/covered ponds (IMAQulate project, unpublished data).
103 Therefore, the aim of the present study was to assess the effectiveness of the individual and a
104 combined use of probiotics against 'no-treatment' control and a biofloc system during an
105 extended nursing period.

106

107 **2. Materials and methods**

108 **2.1 Study site and experimental animal**

109 The experiment was conducted at Radiant Hatchery and Culture Ltd., Noabeki, Shayamnagar,
110 Satkhira, Bangladesh (22°21'17.0"N, 89°12'13.2"E). Specific pathogen free (SPF) post larvae
111 (PL15), with an average weight and length of 0.0077 ± 0.0031 g and 1.30 ± 0.14 cm, respectively,
112 were collected from MKA hatchery, Cox's Bazar district (21°16'50.4"N, 92°02'58.0"E). PLs
113 were acclimated to a salinity of 10 in tanks for 24 hours prior to transfer to the experimental
114 tanks.

115 **2.2 Experimental design**

116 PLs were randomly allocated into a negative control group with no addition of PHPs and five
117 treatment groups namely in-feed probiotic (F_PRO), water probiotic (W_PRO), a combination
118 of in-feed & water probiotic (FW_SYN), biofloc and a combination of in-feed probiotic and
119 biofloc (F_PRO & biofloc), respectively (Table 1). Treatments were unknown (blind) for the
120 nursery technician and lab technician to avoid bias. Thirty fiberglass tanks of 600 L capacity
121 were used as experimental units, with 5 replicates per treatment. Each tank was filled with 450
122 L water and stocked with 700 PLs at a density of 1.56 PL/L then reared for 27 days. Growth,

123 survival, feed conversion ratio (FCR), final biomass, final weight and length were recorded
124 at the end of an extended nursing phase.

125 **2.3 Tanks preparations**

126 Fiberglass tanks were cleaned, disinfected and filled with 450 L water of 10 salinity. Around
127 10% volume of water was exchanged with fresh water weekly in all treatments for 27 days
128 except BFT and F_PRO&biofloc treatments (zero water exchange). Tanks were randomly
129 allocated for F_PRO, W_PRO, FW_SYN, BFT, F_PRO& biofloc and control after stocking
130 with PLs.

131

132 **2.4 PHPs and biofloc**

133 For this trial, PHPs were selected based on previously developed tool ‘pedigree analysis tool-
134 IMAQUlate project’, in which PHPs were assessed according to the following factors: use-
135 prevalence, declared manufacturing quality assurance certification, declared mode of action,
136 active ingredient composition, and concentration . The latter two factors were assessed by
137 through laboratory analysis and compared against manufacturer declarations on the product
138 packaging. The PHPs were selected from ‘high-scoring’ products that were assessed using the
139 pedigree analysis tool. The dose, frequency and mode of application of probiotics (Table 1)
140 were administered according to the manufacturer’s instructions. In-feed probiotic was added
141 as 5g/kg feed every meal for F_PRO, FW_SYN and F_PRO&biofloc treatments. In-feed
142 probiotic powder, a mixture of *Bacillus subtilis*, *Bacillus licheniformis*, *Bacillus pumilus*, was
143 *mixed to the feed 30 minutes before every meal*. Water probiotic, *Bacillus subtilis*, *Bacillus*
144 *licheniformis*, was added as 1 g/1000 L of water once a day for W_PRO and FW_SYN
145 treatments. The water probiotic powder was first added to one litter of tank water and kept
146 under aeration, one hour before adding to the tanks according to the manufacturer instructions.
147 In biofloc and F_PRO&biofloc treatments, sucrose was added 3 times per day as an external

148 source of carbon (C) to adjust the Carbon (C): Nitrogen (N) ratio at 16:1. The amount of C and
149 N in feed and the consequent amount of sucrose were calculated according to Emerenciano et
150 al. (2012). The amount of sucrose was calculated every day based on the amount of feed and
151 the adjusted C:N ratio.

152 **2.5 Feed and feeding management**

153 For the first three days of the experiment, PLs were fed on *Artemia* and commercial feed
154 “FRIPPAK Raceway 500”, 3 times/day. From the 4th to 10th days, PLs were fed FRIPPAK
155 Raceway 500 feed only and then commercial feed FRIPPAK Raceway 700 was used until end
156 of the experiment. The approximate analysis of “FRIPPAK Raceway 500 and FRIPPAK
157 Raceway 700” was; protein 46%, lipid 7%, fiber 3% and moisture 9%. From the 4th day,
158 feeding regime was according to the manufacturer’s instructions, 6 times/day at 02:00, 06:00,
159 10:00, 14:00, 18:00 and 22:00 h, starting with 1 g/day/tank then a daily increase of 0.3 g.

160 **2.6 Water quality parameters**

161 Water temperature, dissolved oxygen (DO) and pH were measured twice a day using a portable
162 temperature-DO meter (Lutron PDO 519) and HANNA pH meter (HI98107), respectively. The
163 total ammonia nitrogen (TAN) and nitrite (NO₂-N) were measured daily using colorimetric test
164 kits: Advance Pharma Co Ltd., Thailand and Marine Leader Co., Ltd., Thailand, respectively.
165 Alkalinity was measured daily by titration-based chemical test kits (Hanna Instrument -
166 HI3811). Salinity was measured daily using a refractometer (ATAGO-Master refractometer,
167 Tokyo, Japan). Total suspended solids (TSS) were measured daily using a Imhoff Cone (1000
168 mL, DIN 12672, VITLAB) in BFT and F_PRO&BFT treatments only.

169

170

171

172 **2.7 Growth parameters**

173 The initial body weight and length of the PL15 (n=60) was measured at the day of stocking of
174 the nursery tanks. At the end of the experiment, 30 juveniles were randomly collected from
175 each tank to measure the final body weight and length. Samples used for these measures were
176 then discarded. The observed body weight and food intake data were used to calculate the
177 following growth indices:

178
$$\text{Weight gain} = \text{Final weight}(g) - \text{Initial weight}(g)$$

179

180
$$\text{Specific growth rate (SGR) (\%)} = \frac{\ln W_2 - \ln W_1}{t_2 - t_1} \times 100$$

181 Where \ln is a logarithmic number and W_1 and W_2 are the weights at times t_1 and t_2 , respectively,
182 with t_1 and t_2 being the first and final day of the experiment, respectively.

183
$$\text{Length gain} = \text{Final length (cm)} - \text{Initial length (cm)}$$

184
$$\text{Survival (\%)} = \frac{\text{Shrimp number at the end of the experiment}}{\text{Shrimp number at the beginning of the experiment}} \times 100$$

185
$$\text{Food conversion ratio (FCR)} = \frac{\text{Total feed given}(g)}{\text{Wet weight gain}(g)}$$

186 The weight length relationship (condition factor, k) was calculated according to Ali et al. (2008)
187 using the equation:

188
$$\text{Condition factor (K)} = \frac{W}{L^3} \times 100$$

189 Where W is the weight of shrimps (g) and L is total length of shrimp (cm)

190

191

192 **2.8 Microbiological analyses**

193 Water and shrimp samples were analysed for the total bacterial count (TBC) and total *Vibrio*
194 count (TVC) at the end of the experiment. Nutrient agar (Allen et al., 2004) and thiosulfate
195 citrate bile salt-sucrose (TCBS) agar media were used for the TBC and TVC (Jorgensen et al.,
196 2015), respectively. Five juveniles were randomly collected from each replicate. The whole
197 animal was processed for preparation of stock solution and weighed by an electric balance
198 aseptically (HR-200). The weighed samples were then taken in a sterile vortex mixer with 5 ml
199 alkaline saline peptone water for proper mixing. The mixed samples were taken in sterile
200 eppendorf tubes for centrifugation at 3,000 rpm for 4 minutes (Centrifuge (5415 D). After
201 centrifugation the supernatant was collected in a sterile falcon tube, followed by serial
202 dilutions. One ml of diluted solution was poured on solid media aseptically by sterile
203 micropipette and was spread out properly with a sterilized L-shaped glass rod. All plates were
204 incubated at 30°C for 24 hours after spreading. After incubation the bacterial colonies grown
205 in the plates were counted, considering only the plates containing between 10 and 300 colonies.

206

207 **2.9 Salinity stress test**

208 At the end of the experiment, 30 animals randomly selected from each tank were placed in 5L
209 aerated plastic container with 5 salinity with no feeding (Chen et al., 2016). The salinity was
210 reduced from 5 to 1 after 24 h, and further reduced from 1 to 0 after another 24 h. Dead animals
211 were collected and counted every 4 h.

212 **2.10 Statistical Analyses**

213 All data were entered into MS Excel (Microsoft Corporation) and Statistical Package for Social
214 Science, SPSS 16.0 (SPSS, Chicago, IL, USA). A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA)
215 followed by the Duncan Multiple Range Test was used to determine the significance of

216 differences between treatments. For the challenge test, survival in each treatment and the
217 control was plotted using Kaplan-Meier survival estimates and Mantel-Cox log-rank tests (two-
218 way) were performed to determine whether significant differences existed in survival between
219 treatments. A p value of ≤ 0.05 was considered to indicate statistical significance.

220 **2.11. Ethics statement**

221 The experimental animals and protocols used in this study were approved by the Animal
222 Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) at the University of Sterling.

223

224 **3. Results and discussions**

225 **3.1 Water quality**

226 All water quality parameters (Table 2) were within the optimal range for growth of shrimp
227 (Kannupandi et al., 2002; Krishnaprakash, 2007; Uddin et al., 2013). There were no significant
228 difference in the mean values of temperature, DO, alkalinity, and TAN between treatments.
229 Nitrite ($\text{NO}_3\text{-N}$) was significantly lower ($P \leq 0.05$) in biofloc and F_PRO&biofloc compared
230 to other treatments. These results implied that the addition of sucrose as a carbon source had a
231 role in inorganic nitrogen reduction through stimulating the growth of heterotrophic bacteria
232 (Emerenciano et al., 2012; Luo et al., 2014). The pH was also significantly lower ($P \leq 0.05$) in
233 biofloc treatments (BFT and F_PRO&biofloc) than only probiotic treatments and control.
234 These low values of the water pH may be due to the high level of inorganic carbon caused by
235 the decomposition of bacterial organic matter (Panjaitan, 2010). The TSS levels (Table 2) were
236 increased gradually over the experimental period. However, the mean values of TSS in the
237 present experiment were lower than the range recommended for shrimp farming in biofloc
238 system (Samocha et al., 2007).

239 3.2 Growth performance

240 The final body weight and weight gain of juveniles were significantly higher ($P \leq 0.05$) in
241 F_PRO&biofloc compared to other treatments and control, with biofloc at an intermediate level
242 (Table 3). Most of the studies on biofloc systems reported a significant increase in the growth
243 performance of the cultured animals (Azim and Little, 2008; Xu and Pan, 2012; Luo et al.,
244 2014). In the present study, shrimp were observed to occasionally graze on the bioflocs that
245 were suspended in the water in the biofloc and F_PRO&biofloc. Hence, the bioflocs act as an
246 important and additional natural food source that enhance growth rates of the shrimp
247 (Wasielesky et al., 2006; Arnold et al., 2009). Bioflocs could provide more proteins, lipids,
248 minerals and vitamins necessary for growth (Thompson et al., 2002; Moss et al., 2006). A
249 significantly higher ($P \leq 0.05$) SGR was found in F_PRO&biofloc than other treatments and
250 CTRL, with no significant differences ($p \geq 0.05$) between biofloc and F_PRO& biofloc (Table
251 3). The results in the present study indicated that juveniles treated in the biofloc systems (BFT
252 and F_PRO& biofloc) performed better growth than only probiotic and control. This result is
253 in agreement with the findings of Xu et al. (2012). At the end of experiment, juvenile survival
254 rates were above 75%, with no significant differences ($p \geq 0.05$) between treatments and control
255 (Table 3). The high survival rate indicated the acceptable culture condition in tanks and diets
256 provided. Similar survival rates were reported by Zhou et al. (2009) and Xu et al. (2013) for
257 shrimp treated with probiotics and biofloc system, respectively. The FCR varied from 0.74 to
258 0.90 (Table 3) and it was significantly higher ($p \leq 0.05$) in treatment with biofloc &F_PRO
259 than other treatments and CTRL; however, FCR did not vary significantly ($p \geq 0.05$) between
260 biofloc and biofloc &F_PRO. A similar trend of results reported in previous studies for shrimp
261 produced in biofloc system (Ray and Lotz, 2014; Effendy et al., 2016).

262

263 3.3 Microbiological parameters

264 The average TBC in water samples taken from W_PRO was higher ($3.2 \pm 0.73 \times 10^6$ CFU ml⁻¹) ($p \geq 0.05$) than other treatments and control (Table 4). The average TBC in shrimp samples
265 varied from 3.1 ± 1.1 to $6.0 \pm 1.9 \times 10^6$ CFU g⁻¹ with no significant differences ($p \geq 0.05$) among
266 treatments. The TBC was higher in tanks that received a combination treatment of in-feed
267 probiotic and biofloc compared to control. A similar tendency was also reported by Nimrat et
268 al. (2012) and Kumar et al. (2017) for shrimp treated with probiotics and molasses,
269 respectively. Our results showed that the use of biofloc as a culture system contributed to an
270 increase in the bacterial abundance in the gut of shrimp, with the addition of the probiotic
271 mixture. Hu et al. (2017) reported that the use of probiotic and molasses promoted the
272 formation and development of a beneficial microbial community in intensive shrimp culture.
273 These results corroborate the findings of the present study in which a combination of sucrose
274 and probiotic increased the total bacterial count in the F_PRO& biofloc. The TVC in the water
275 and shrimp samples was found to be higher ($p \geq 0.05$) in the control compared to treatments
276 with the use of probiotics and sucrose (Table 4). In the present study, the application of
277 probiotics and sucrose in treatments containing *Bacillus spp* within the probiotic may have
278 been responsible for the lower TVC in the water and shrimp compared to those in the control.
279 This is in line with Li et al. (2009) and Villaseñor et al. (2013) reported the addition of a
280 commercial probiotic mixture containing *Bacillus* was able to modify the gut bacterial
281 community in shrimp included decreasing the number of *Vibrio*. In many cases, *Vibrio spp.* are
282 opportunists, causing disease and mortality in animals only in a physiologically stressed
283 condition (Alderman and Hastings 1998).

285

286 3.4 Salinity stress test

287 The survival rate in the salinity stress test varied among different treatments (Fig. 1). A highly
288 significant ($P \leq 0.05$) survival rate was observed in juveniles treated with F_PRO&BFT
289 followed by biofloc than other treatments and control. The present study indicated that the
290 application of biofloc technology could improve juveniles quality and performance and
291 consequently the tolerance rate to stressful conditions. This result is consistent with a previous
292 study conducted by Ekasari et al. (2015). Stress tests are commonly used methods to assess the
293 quality of cultured species (MacNiven and Little, 2001). Salinity stress test has been used to
294 assess the osmotic capability as an indicator of the general robustness of the animal (MacNiven
295 and Little, 2001 and Salze et al., 2008). *Penaeus monodon* exhibits hyper-osmotic regulation
296 at low salinity levels, and hypo-osmotic regulation at high salinity levels (Cheng and Liao
297 1986).

298

299 **4. Conclusion**

300 This study found a higher growth performance of shrimp reared in biofloc alone or in
301 combination with in-feed probiotic than only probiotic treatments and control. The survival
302 rate was significantly higher in animals that received a combined treatment of in-feed probiotic
303 and biofloc followed by biofloc compared to other treatments and control over the period of
304 salinity stress test. The study also showed that pH and nitrite concentrations were significantly
305 lower in the biofloc treatment compared to other treatments and the control. However, these
306 results were based on an experiment under controlled commercial hatchery conditions, and 'on
307 farm' environmental conditions may be different. Further on-farm trials would be useful to
308 further explore the efficacy of micro-biofloc tank systems alone or combined with in-feed
309 probiotic to smallholder farmers.

310

311

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318

319 **Conflict of interest statement**

320 Authors are declaring that they do not have any conflict of interest.

321

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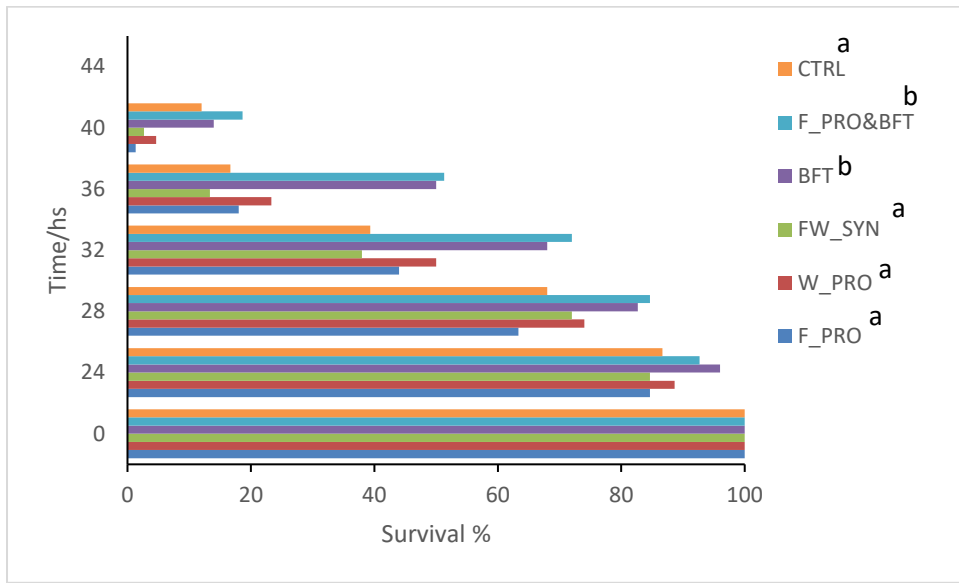
478 **Data Availability Statement**

479 The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding
480 author.

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483 **List of Figures**



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485 Figure 1: Cumulative survival of shrimp juveniles exposed to salinity stress test at the end of
486 an extended nursery phase using Kaplan-Meier (Log-rank Mantel Cox) . Groups that do not
487 share letters are significantly different ($p < 0.05$).

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495 **List of Tables**

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497 **Table 1:** Experimental design and treatments of *Penaeus monodon* at the extended nursing

498 phase.

Code	Description	PHPs active ingredient/s
F_PRO	In-feed probiotic (a)	<i>Bacillus subtilis</i> , <i>Bacillus licheniformis</i> , <i>Bacillus pumilus</i> (a)
W_PRO	Water probiotic (b)	<i>Bacillus subtilis</i> , <i>Bacillus licheniformis</i> (b)
FW_SYN	In-feed and water probiotic (c)	a&b
Biofloc	Biofloc (d)	Sucrose (d)
F_PRO&biofloc	In-feed probiotic and biofloc (e)	a&d
Control	Control	No additives

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507 Table 2: Mean (\pm SE) values of water quality parameters during the extended nursery phase

Parameters	Treatments					
	F_PRO	W_PRO	FW_SYN	biofloc	F_PRO&biofloc	Control
Temperature ($^{\circ}$ C)	29 \pm 0.05	29 \pm 0.03	29 \pm 0.05	29 \pm 0.10	29 \pm 0.05	29 \pm 0.06
DO (mg/l)	7.2 \pm 0.01	7.2 \pm 0.01	7.2 \pm 0.01	7.2 \pm 0.03	7.2 \pm 0.02	7.2 \pm 0.02
pH	7.93 \pm 0.01 ^a	7.91 \pm 0.00 ^a	7.91 \pm 0.00 ^a	7.86 \pm 0.01 ^b	7.87 \pm 0.01 ^b	7.93 \pm 0.01 ^a
TAN (mg/l)	0.40 \pm 0.02	0.54 \pm 0.06	0.47 \pm 0.05	0.50 \pm 0.04	0.57 \pm 0.04	0.41 \pm 0.03
Nitrite (mg/l)	1.0 \pm 0.09 ^a	1.2 \pm 0.06 ^b	1.1 \pm 0.05 ^{ab}	0.34 \pm 0.06 ^c	0.36 \pm 0.03 ^c	1.1 \pm 0.06 ^{ab}
Alkalinity (mg/l)	170 \pm 2.4	172 \pm 3.0	166 \pm 3.4	159 \pm 3.4	170 \pm 5.1	169 \pm 2.3
TSS (mg/l)	--	--	--	1.92 \pm 0.02	1.96 \pm 0.02	--

508 Different subscripts within rows indicate significant differences ($P \leq 0.05$)

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525 Table 3: Growth parameters (mean ± SE) at the end of the extended nursery phase

Parameters	Treatments					
	F_PRO	W_PRO	FW_SYN	Biofloc	F_PRO&biofloc	Control
Weight gain (g)	0.24 ± 0.01 ^a	0.25 ± 0.01 ^a	0.25 ± 0.01 ^a	0.28 ± 0.01 ^{ab}	0.30 ± 0.02 ^b	0.24 ± 0.01 ^a
SGR (%)	5.6 ± 0.09 ^a	5.6 ± 0.07 ^a	5.6 ± 0.06 ^a	5.8 ± 0.07 ^{ab}	5.9 ± 0.09 ^b	5.6 ± 0.06 ^a
Survival rate (%)	79 ± 1.2	79 ± 1.3	75 ± 1.6	79 ± 1.8	78 ± 1.6	79 ± 2.1
Length gain (cm)	1.9 ± 0.07 ^a	2.1 ± 0.04 ^b	2.1 ± 0.07 ^b	2.1 ± 0.06 ^{ab}	2.1 ± 0.04 ^b	2.0 ± 0.10 ^{ab}
Condition factor	0.63 ± 0.02 ^a	0.62 ± 0.02 ^a	0.63 ± 0.02 ^a	0.64 ± 0.01 ^{ab}	0.69 ± 0.02 ^b	0.62 ± 0.02 ^a
FCR	0.90 ± 0.06 ^a	0.86 ± 0.05 ^{ab}	0.90 ± 0.04 ^a	0.78 ± 0.05 ^{ab}	0.74 ± 0.05 ^b	0.90 ± 0.03 ^a

526 Different subscripts within rows indicate significant differences ($P \leq 0.05$)

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543 Table 4: Total bacterial count (TBC) and total vibrio count (TVC) of water and shrimp
 544 samples at the end of the extended nursery phase

Treatments	TBC		TVC	
	Water (10 ⁶ CFU ml ⁻¹)	Shrimp (10 ⁶ CFU g ⁻¹)	Water (10 ³ CFU ml ⁻¹)	Shrimp (10 ³ CFU g ⁻¹)
F_PRO	1.8±0.53	4.8±1.1	5.8±3.6	2.9±2.1
W_PRO	3.2±0.73	5.6±1.4	10±3.3	9.9±5.2
FW_SYN	1.4±0.22	5.9±1.5	7.7±2.8	6.3±5.1
Biofloc	2.3±1.1	3.9±0.58	3.8±2.4	7.0±4.2
F_PRO&biofloc	2.9±1.1	6.0±1.9	1.2±0.86	6.1±1.4
Control	1.4±1.1	3.1±1.1	12±6.1	10±6.2

545 Different subscripts within colluman indicate significant differences ($P \leq 0.05$)