UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

PERFORMANCE OF PROBIOTIC Bacillus subtilis G1 AS A DIETARY SUPPLEMENT FOR Hemibagrus nemurus Valenciennes FINGERLINGS

FARHANA AHMAD AFFANDI

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By

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Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

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PERFORMANCE OF PROBIOTIC Bacillus subtilis G1 AS A DIETARY SUPPLEMENT FOR Hemibagrus nemurus Valenciennes FINGERLINGS

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October 2014

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A study was carried out to investigate the probiotic activity of Bacillus subtilis G1 isolated from fermented pickles on Hemibagrus nemurus fingerlings at Universiti Putra Malaysia. Hemibagrus nemurus is a highly price fish that is commercially cultured in Southeast Asia for its excellent taste. However, H. nemurus is a slow-growing fish that take almost a year to reach marketable price. Large-scales aquaculture of this fish has exposed the fish to a stressful condition such as diseases. Aeromonas hydrophila is known to be the famous bacterial infections in Bagridae catfishes. Growth hormones and antibiotics have been used for a long time in aquaculture to increase production and to prevent diseases. However, these substances have caused many problems. Therefore, probiotics are used as an alternative method for sustainable aquaculture.

This probiotic was mixed in feed at doses of 0 (C, control), 10^9 (T1), 10^7 (T2) and 10^5 (T3) cfu g^-1 and administrated to H. nemurus fingerlings for nine weeks. Results showed that H. nemurus fed with diet containing 10^7 cfu g^-1 of B. subtilis G1 had significantly higher weight gain, total length and specific growth rate with 248.69 ± 3.31%, 13.65 ± 0.09 cm and 1.98 ± 0.09% respectively, and better protein efficiency ratio and food conversion ratio with 19.71 ± 0.33 and 1.68 ± 0.03 respectively, than those fed with the control, 10^5, and 10^9 cfu g^-1 diets. Total protein gain of the body fish fed probiotic diets also increases with the increasing weight gain. This probiotic was also found to improve the water quality by lowering the NH3-N concentration. The haematological parameters such red blood cells, haemoglobin, haematocrit and mean corpuscular haemoglobin concentration, in the fish fed probiotic diets was higher compared to the control.

Inhibitory activity of the probiotic B. subtilis G1 against fish pathogens such as Aeromonas hydrophila and Streptococcus agalactiae was evaluated by well diffusion agar method. Inhibition zone measured showed strong inhibitory activity against A. hydrophila and S. agalactiae with 16.13 ± 0.91 mm and 17.5 ± 1.84 mm respectively. Later, H. nemurus of all groups were fed with their respective diets for three weeks and then were challenged with 10^6 cfu ml^-1 of A. hydrophila (0.1 ml) by intraperitoneal injection. After 14 days, the cumulative mortality of H. nemurus were
significantly lower in the group T1 with 30 ± 5.8% as compared to the T2 (36.7 ± 3.3%), T3 (46.7 ± 3.3%) and C (56.7 ± 3.3%) groups. These findings proved that supplementation of *B. subtilis* G1 in the diet at $10^9$ cfu g$^{-1}$ can improve growth and disease resistance in *H. nemurus* fingerlings.
Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

PRESTASI PROBIOTIK Bacillus subtilis G1 SEBAGAI PENAMBAHAN DIET UNTUK JEJARI BAUNG (Hemibagrus nemurus Valenciennes)

Oleh
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Oktober 2014

Pengerusi: Profesor Madya Che Roos Saad, PhD
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Probiotik dicampurkan ke dalam makanan ikan dengan dos 0 (C), 10^9 (T1), 10^7 (T2) dan 10^5 (T3) sel g^-1 dan diberi makan kepada jejari Baung selama sembilan minggu. Keputusan telah menunjukkan bahawa Baung yang diberi diet yang mengandungi 10^7 sel g^-1 B. subtilis G1 mempunyai peratus pertambahan berat, panjang dan kadar pertumbuhan spesifik yang nyata sekali lebih tinggi dengan nilai masing-masing 248.69 ± 3.31%, 13.65 ± 0.09 sm dan 1.98 ± 0.09%, serta mempunyai nisbah kecekapan protein dan nisbah penukaran makanan yang baik dengan nilai masing-masing 19.71 ± 0.33 dan 1.68 ± 0.03, berbanding dengan diet kawalan, 10^5, dan 10^9 sel g^-1. Jumlah protein terkumpul dalam Baung yang diberi diet berprobiotik juga bertambah dengan pertambahan berat badannya. Probiotik tersebut juga didapat mampu meningkatkan kualiti air dengan merendahkan kepekatan NH3-N. Parameter hematologi seperti sel darah merah, hemoglobin, hematokrit dan kepekatan korpuskular hemoglobin Baung yang memakan diet berprobiotik turut bertambah berbanding dengan kawalan.

Aktiviti perencatan probiotik B. subtilis G1 terhadap patogen Aeromonas hydrophila dan Streptococcus agalactiae dinilai melalui ujian resapan gel agar. Zon perencatan yang terbentuk menunjukkan aktiviti perencatan yang kuat terhadap A. hydrophila dan S. agalactiae dengan zon masing-masing 16.13 ± 0.91 mm dan 17.5 ± 1.84 mm.
Jejari Baung dari semua kumpulan kemudiannya diberi diet masing-masing selama tiga minggu dan kemudian diuji dengan \(10^6\) sel ml\(^{-1}\) *A. hydrophila* (0.1 ml) melalui suntikan intraperitoneal. Selepas 14 hari, kematian terkumpul Baung nyata sekali lebih rendah dalam kumpulan T1 dengan 30 ± 5.8% berbanding dengan kumpulan T2 (36.7 ± 3.3%), T3 (46.7 ± 3.3%) dan C (56.7 ± 3.3%). Penemuan ini membuktikan bahawa penambahan *B. subtilis* G1 pada dos \(10^9\) sel g\(^{-1}\) dalam diet ikan mampu meningkatkan pertumbuhan dan ketahanan penyakit dalam jejari ikan Baung.
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Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my family, especially my mom and dad, for the faith and support that have given me the inspiration and patience necessary to see this journey through. For that, I am immeasurably grateful.
I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 31 October 2014 to conduct the final examination of Farhana Ahmad Affandi on her thesis entitled "Performance of probiotic *Bacillus subtilis* G1 as a dietary supplement for *Hemibagrus nemurus* Valencienne fingerlings" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature:</th>
<th>Signature:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Chairman of Supervisory Committee:</td>
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<th>Signature:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Member of Supervisory Committee:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>__________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABSTRACT</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRAK</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER

1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION
   1.1 Background of Study 1
   1.2 Problem Statement 2
   1.3 Objectives 3

2 LITERATURE REVIEW
   2.1 Status of Aquaculture 5
   2.2 Classification of Hemibagrus nemurus 8
   2.3 Biological Features 8
   2.4 Habitat and Biology 8
   2.5 Distribution and Economic Status 9
   2.6 Catfish Culture 9
   2.7 Catfish Pathogen, Aeromonas hydrophila 10
   2.8 Probiotics
      2.8.1 Definition of Probiotic 12
      2.8.2 Selection of Probiotic Bacteria 12
      2.8.3 Mode of Action 13
      2.8.4 Probiotic Studies in Aquaculture 15
      2.8.5 Probiotic Bacteria Bacillus subtilis 19

3 GENERAL METHODOLOGY
   3.1 Bacterial Strain 21
   3.2 Diet Preparation 21
   3.3 Water Quality Analysis 21
   3.4 Haematological Analysis 22
   3.5 Histopathological Assessment 22
   3.6 Statistical Analysis 24

4 EFFECTS OF Bacillus subtilis G1 ON GROWTH PERFORMANCE AND BODY COMPOSITION OF Hemibagrus nemurus FINGERLINGS
   4.1 Introduction 25
   4.2 Methodology
      4.2.1 Bacterial Strain 26
      4.2.2 Pathogenicity of Probiotic to H. nemurus 26
4.2.3 Feeding Trial

4.3 Results
4.3.1 Pathogenicity of Probiotic to H. nemurus 31
4.3.2 Growth Parameters of H. nemurus 33
4.3.3 Body Composition of H. nemurus 34
4.3.4 Water Parameters 35
4.3.5 Haematological Parameters 36
4.3.6 Histopathology 37

4.4 Discussion 40
4.5 Conclusion 43

5 RESISTANCE OF PROBIOTIC FED Hemibagrus nemurus FINGERLINGS TO Aeromonas hydrophila INFECTION
5.1 Introduction 45
5.2 Methodology
5.2.1 Bacterial Strain 46
5.2.2 Antagonistic Activity and Dilution Effect of Probiotic by Agar Well Diffusion Method 46
5.2.3 Median Lethal Dose (LD50) of A. hydrophila Infection 46
5.2.4 Challenge Test 47

5.3 Results
5.3.1 Antagonistic Activity and Dilution Effect of Probiotic 49
5.3.2 LD50 Test 49
5.3.3 Challenge Test 52
5.3.4 Water Parameters 55
5.3.6 Haematological Parameters 55
5.3.7 Histopathology 56

5.4 Discussion 61
5.5 Conclusion 63

6 GENERAL DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION 65

REFERENCES 69
BIODATA OF STUDENT 81
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS 82
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>World capture fisheries and aquaculture production and utilization (million tonnes) (Source: FAO, 2012)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Malaysian capture fisheries and aquaculture production (Source: DoF, 2013)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Proximate composition (means ± SE) of commercial feed (CP)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Cumulative mortality of <em>H. nemurus</em> fingerlings at 14 days of post-challenge with probiotic <em>B. subtilis</em></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Effect of <em>B. subtilis</em> G1 on growth performance of <em>H. nemurus</em> fingerlings</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Proximate composition of <em>H. nemurus</em> whole body tissues (% DM basis) before (initial) and after fed with different diets</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Water quality in the <em>H. nemurus</em> rearing tanks</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Haematological parameters of <em>H. nemurus</em> after 9 weeks of probiotic feeding</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Inhibitory activity of <em>B. subtilis</em> G1 supernatant against pathogens</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Means of cumulative mortality of <em>H. nemurus</em> fingerlings challenged with <em>A. hydrophila</em> at 14 days of LD₅₀ test</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Cumulative mortality of <em>H. nemurus</em> fingerlings fed with probiotic at 14 days of post-infection with <em>A. hydrophila</em></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Water quality during the challenge test</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Haematological parameters of <em>H. nemurus</em> fed probiotic diets after 14 days of challenge with <em>A. hydrophila</em></td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Flowchart of histological procedures</td>
<td>22-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Cumulative mortality of <em>H. nemurus</em> fingerlings at 14 days of post-challenge with different doses of probiotic <em>B. subtilis</em></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>(a) <em>H. nemurus</em> fed with probiotic diet is bigger than (b) <em>H. nemurus</em> fed with control diet at 9 weeks of post-feeding</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Spleen of control fish (9-wkpf) showing red pulp area (R) and vacuolative changes (arrow) within the white pulp area (W). Mag. 200x; H&amp;E.</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Spleen of T1 fish (9-wkpf) showing healthy spleen parenchyma with white pulp (W) and red pulp (R) areas. Mag. 200x; H&amp;E; T1, diet + 10⁹ cfu g⁻¹ <em>B. subtilis</em> G1.</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Spleen of T2 fish (9-wkpf) showing increased size of white pulp area (W) and red pulp area (R) within the spleen parenchyma. Mag. 200x; H&amp;E; T2, diet + 10⁷ cfu g⁻¹ <em>B. subtilis</em> G1.</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Spleen of T3 fish (9-wkpf) showing mild atrophy of white pulp (W) and red pulp (R) areas. Mag. 200x; H&amp;E; T3, diet + 10⁵ cfu g⁻¹ <em>B. subtilis</em> G1.</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Infected <em>H. nemurus</em> showing hyperaemic skin discolouration on lateral side of the body</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Pale coloured liver (L) and swollen intestines (I) at 14 days of post-infection</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Yellow mucus-like fluid in the intestine (arrow)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Cumulative mortality of <em>H. nemurus</em> fingerlings fed with probiotic at 14-dpi with pathogen <em>A. hydrophila</em> (3.16 x 10⁶ cfu ml⁻¹). C, control (without <em>B. subtilis</em> G1); T1, fed diet + 10⁹ cfu g⁻¹ <em>B. subtilis</em> G1; T2, fed diet + 10⁷ cfu g⁻¹ <em>B. subtilis</em> G1; T3, fed diet + 10⁵ cfu g⁻¹ <em>B. subtilis</em> G1.</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Liver of control fish (3-wkpf) showing vacuolation of hepatocyte cytoplasm (arrowhead) and hepatic blood vessel containing increase presence of mononucleated WBCs (arrow). Mag. 200x; H&amp;E.</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.6 Liver of T1 fish (3-wkpf) showing a central vein (arrow) and normal hepatocytes architecture. Mag. 200x; H&E; T1, diet + $10^9$ cfu g$^{-1}$ *B. subtilis* G1.

5.7 Liver of T1 fish (14-dpi) showing hepatocyte undergoing degeneration (loss of cell architecture) and hemorrhaging (arrow) in fish challenged with live *A. hydrophila*. Mag. 200x; H&E; T1, diet + $10^9$ cfu g$^{-1}$ *B. subtilis* G1.

5.8 Spleen of control fish (14-dpi) showing increased accumulation of blood in the spleen parenchyma and increased hemosiderin deposition (arrow). Mag. 200x; H&E.

5.9 Degenerated spleen parenchyma of T1 fish (14-dpi) with marked vacuolation (arrow) within the white pulp area (W) and reduced red pulp area (R). Mag. 200x; H&E; T1, diet + $10^9$ cfu g$^{-1}$ *B. subtilis* G1.

5.10 Spleen of T2 fish (14-dpi) showing increased deposition of hemosiderin (arrow). Mag. 200x; H&E; T2, diet + $10^7$ cfu g$^{-1}$ *B. subtilis* G1.

5.11 A section from T3 fish (14-dpi) showing degenerated white pulp (W) and red pulp (R) areas of the spleen parenchyma with marked vacuolisation (arrow). Mag. 200x; H&E; T3, diet + $10^5$ cfu g$^{-1}$ *B. subtilis* G1.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA  Analysis of variance
cfu    Colony forming unit
CP     Charoen Pokphand
DM     Dry-matter
DO     Dissolved oxygen
DoF    Department of Fisheries
dpi    Days of post-infection
EDTA   Ethylene-diamine-tetra-acetic acid
FAO    Food Agriculture Organization
FCR    Feed conversion ratio
g      Gram
h      Hour
Hb     Haemoglobin
HCl    Hydrochloric acid
Hct    Haematocrit
K₂SO₄  Potassium sulfate
L      Liter
m      Meter
MCHC   Mean corpuscular haemoglobin concentration
MCV    Mean corpuscular volume
min    Minute
ml     Milliliter
mm     Millimeter
n      Number of samples
NaOH   Sodium hydroxide
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NH$_3$-N</td>
<td>Ammonia-Nitrogen</td>
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<td>nm</td>
<td>Nanometer</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSS</td>
<td>Normal saline solution</td>
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<tr>
<td>PER</td>
<td>Protein efficiency ratio</td>
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<td>ppm</td>
<td>Part per million</td>
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<td>ppt</td>
<td>Part per thousand</td>
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<td>RBC</td>
<td>Red blood cell</td>
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<td>rpm</td>
<td>Round per minute</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Standard error</td>
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<tr>
<td>SGR</td>
<td>Specific growth rate</td>
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<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>TSA</td>
<td>Tryptic Soy Agar</td>
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<td>TSB</td>
<td>Tryptic Soy Broth</td>
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<tr>
<td>UPM</td>
<td>Universiti Putra Malaysia</td>
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<tr>
<td>WBC</td>
<td>White blood cell</td>
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<tr>
<td>wkpf</td>
<td>Weeks of post-feeding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

*Hemibagrus nemurus* is commonly known as the Asian redtail catfish or locally known as Baung (Rainboth, 1996). This catfish is widely cultured in floating net cage along the river rather than in a pond. *Hemibagrus nemurus* is a highly priced aquarium fish but is commercially cultured as live food fish trade for its high nutrient content and good taste. *Hemibagrus nemurus* is a slow-growing fish that can take almost a year to reach marketable price as compared to other catfishes, under similar culture condition.

Aquaculture is widely practiced in many countries and has become an important source of income. Unfortunately, the large-scales of aquaculture practices have exposed the cultured fish and shellfish to stressful conditions, such as diseases and environmental changes that results to economic losses. Consequently, the fish production is maximised through application of commercial diets, addition of antibiotics, growth promoters, and several other additives. These drawbacks can be overcome by the use of probiotics or beneficial bacteria in aquaculture to control diseases as well as increase growth to reach marketable size in a shorter culture period. Probiotics have directly become an alternative way to antibiotic treatment, winning itself as being more environmental friendly for a sustainable aquaculture (Cruz *et al.*, 2012; Mohapatra *et al.*, 2012).

According to Soccol *et al.* (2010), probiotics are microorganisms that are capable of living successfully in the human and animal gut, and producing beneficial physiological effects by assisting in the establishment of intestinal microbial population. This will then have an antagonistic effect towards harmful bacteria, thus being advantageous towards the host. The global market of probiotic ingredients, foods and supplements for humans and animals use in 2008 was approximately US$15,900 million and is estimated to increase up to US$19,600 million in 2013.

As evidence above, probiotics beneficially affect the host by producing inhibitory compounds, competing for adhesion site, nutrient and energy source, as source of nutrients and enzymatic contribution to digestion, enhancing immune response, improving water quality, interacting with phytoplankton, and showing antiviral activity (Cruz *et al.*, 2012; Mohapatra *et al.*, 2012; Chiu *et al.*, 2010; Sun *et al.*, 2010; Son *et al.*, 2009; Sahu *et al.*, 2008; Verschuere *et al.*, 2000).
A fast and simple method of culturing, storing and administrating are more preferred by the aquaculturist. Currently, there are several commercial probiotic products that contain one or more live microorganisms that are marketed in powder or liquid forms. Probiotics are applied to cultured species as a feed additive that is either directly apply to water culture, or mixed with feed and administrated orally.

1.2 Problem Statement

Problems in aquaculture are associated with diseases, floods, predation, chemical poisoning, theft, and other miscellaneous causes. However, disease problems have become the most significant factor to aquaculture losses (De et al., 2014; FAO, 2012; Bostock et al., 2010; Meyer, 1991). In recent years, disease outbreaks have affected farms and hatcheries in several countries in Asia, South America and Africa, resulting in a huge loss of production. In 2010, China suffered losses of 1.7 million tonnes of aquaculture production caused by natural disasters, diseases and pollution. In 2011, Mozambique suffered outbreak of disease on their marine shrimp farming (FAO, 2012). Unfavorable conditions such as overcrowding, temperature fluctuations, inadequate dissolved oxygen (Wedemeyer et al., 1976 as cited in Meyer, 1991), and poor culture practices such mishandling, uncontrolled feed usage and untreated waste management (Subasinghe, 2005), may alter the water culture quality thus contributing to an outbreak of diseases.

Growth and survival of catfish fry to fingerlings vary greatly depending on the condition of the culture tank, stocking densities, food abundance and the incidence of infectious diseases. About 45% of inventory losses on catfish fingerling farms are due to infectious diseases. Of the overall losses, 60% resulted from bacterial infections, 30% from parasitic infestation, 9% from fungal infections, and 1% are viral infections (Anonymous, 2010; Al-Dohail et al., 2009). Pathogens from the genus Aeromonas were commonly found to infect the freshwater fishes in Malaysia and of these pathogens were Aeromonas hydrophila (69.6%), Aeromonas caviae (8.7%) and Aeromonas sobria (21.7%) (Anonymous, 2004).

Controls on many serious infectious diseases have been done through chemical disinfectants, antibiotics and vaccines. However, the use of chemical disinfectants kills not just the bacteria which caused problems to the aquatic species, but also most of the beneficial bacteria in the water column (Sahu et al., 2008). Meanwhile, misuse of antibiotics and the use of unlicensed antibiotics could cause an outburst of antibiotic resistant bacteria (Hashim, 2008; Subasinghe, 2005). Taufik and Bastiawan (2003) have studied the susceptibility of A. hydrophila isolated from Baung to antibiotics such tetracycline, chloramphenicol and nalidixic acid. The results have showed that from 10 isolates of A. hydrophila tested, five isolates were resistant, two isolates were intermediate and three isolates were sensitive to
tetracycline and chloramphenicol. While one isolate was resistant, six isolates were intermediate and two isolates were sensitive to nalidixic acid. From the above findings, that majority of *A. hydrophila* strains were resistance to antibiotics due to the development of bacterial antibiotic resistance.

Vaccines are also well-known to control both bacterial and viral diseases. Unfortunately, vaccination is an expensive, time consuming and complicated process (Taylor, 2012). Moreover, killed vaccines must be inoculated via injection, thus ineffective for commercial application; and live vaccines are known to have possible reversion to virulence (Trust, 1986). Therefore, the use of probiotic bacteria has been suggested to become an alternative method to prevent and control various diseases in aquaculture while improving growth and survival (Chiu *et al*., 2010; Sun *et al*., 2010; Son *et al*., 2009). Moreover, probiotics can be applied at larval and fry stages, where vaccination cannot (Mohapatra *et al*., 2012).

### 1.3 Objectives

*Bacillus subtilis* strain G1 used in this study was isolated by Zokaeifar *et al*. (2012a) from fermented pickles. It has shown to improve the growth of juvenile marine shrimp (*Litopenaeus vannamei*) and increases the survivability of the shrimp from vibriosis. Therefore, this study was conducted on freshwater species against freshwater pathogens. The aims of this study were:

a) To investigate the effect of *Bacillus subtilis* G1 on the growth performance and body composition of *H. nemurus* fingerlings

b) To investigate the effect of *Bacillus subtilis* G1 on disease resistance towards *A. hydrophila* infection on *H. nemurus* fingerlings.
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