

# SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT),  
MR. HO CHENG CHOON, AT THE INAUGURATION DINNER OF THE 11TH  
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE SINGAPORE LIVESTOCK FARMERS'  
ASSOCIATION AT THE OCBC CENTRE CAR PARK RESTAURANT, ON SUNDAY,  
JANUARY 22, 1978, AT 8 P.M.

It gives me great pleasure to be present at the inauguration of the new officials to the 11th Management Committee (1978/79) of the Singapore Livestock Farmers' Association. I would like to congratulate the chairman, Mr. Toh Cheng, and the other officials at being elected to the Management Committee. I am confident that the new chairman, together with the other officials, will carry on the good work of the association and fulfil the objectives of the association in meeting the aspirations of the Singapore livestock farmers.

The Singapore Livestock Farmers' Association was formed in 1963 with the primary objectives of promoting mutual assistance and cooperation amongst members and to upgrade livestock productivity within Singapore. Members of your Association have done well over the years and livestock production in Singapore has increased steadily despite reduction in the land area available for agriculture.

Pig and poultry production has been the principal agricultural activity in Singapore, contributing over 80 per cent of the total agricultural output in the country. In 1977 the value of pig and poultry production reached a record of \$420 million as compared to \$389 million for 1976. This was represented by 1.25 million pigs, 32 million poultry and 500 million pieces of hen eggs. In addition the Republic exported over 12 million day-old chicks. It is commendable that this level of livestock production has been achieved without any tariff or quota protection against very competitive international exports.

At the farm level there has been increased productivity which has enabled many farms to expand their production. Between 1970 and 1977, the number of farms keeping 500 pigs and above has increased from 77 to 327. Similarly farms keeping more than 10,000 poultry have increased from 52 to 169 over the same period. The number of livestock farms on the other hand was reduced by 20 per cent from 12,700 to 10,200 during this period. While these have been achieved through the introduction

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of modern husbandry techniques and genetically superior breeding stock and the application of proper disease control measures by the Primary Production Department, the rapid pace in which this has been achieved has largely been due to the receptiveness of our farmers to modern methods of animal husbandry and management practices.

The responsiveness of the farmers to the Government's move to resettle pig farms from Kranji Catchment to Poŋggol is also indicative of their ability to adapt to changing circumstances. This augurs well for the livestock farming industry for it is essential that the farming sector like the other industrial sectors must be able to meet new demands and challenges. Confronted with the prospect of further reduction of total land suitable for livestock farming, the industry will have to resort to greater intensification in the production methods. Efficiency must not only be maintained, but improved upon. There must be greater awareness of the production cost and every effort should be made to increase productivity and minimise losses through poor management and diseases. With the farms getting larger, the cumulative losses from the single livestock units can be high. For this reason proper records on the overall performance of the herd and flock are essential.

We have reviewed the performance of the livestock industry and while we take pride in acknowledging the contribution of the farming sector in meeting the meat requirements of our population, you should also be mindful of your responsibility to ensure that these basic foods are available to the people at reasonable prices. Meat and eggs represent nearly 30% of the Consumer Price Index and their costs have a significant bearing on the cost of living of our workers. It is important, therefore, that you should look upon yourself as co-partners in the industrial development of Singapore for your contribution in maintaining a stable price of these essential food items will assist to maintain the cost of labour in the other industrial sectors.

You must be ever conscious of the need to maintain a stable price for livestock. The price of pigs in particular has been subject to a wide range of fluctuation over the past few years. With the reduction in the number of small farms, I am confident that your Association would seek to stabilise the price of this essential commodity in the years ahead.