

SPEECH BY DR KOH POH KOON, MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE & INDUSTRY, AT THE SIGNING CEREMONY OF THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT FOR THE INTEGRATED PIG FARM IN JILIN FOOD ZONE, 24 APRIL 2017, 9.30AM, JILIN CITY, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Mr Zhang Huanqiu
Party Secretary of Jilin City

Mr Bai Shanlin
Senior Vice Chairman, Charoen Pokphand

Dr Lee Boon Yang
Chairman, Jilin Food Zone Pte Ltd

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

1 I am delighted to join you this morning to witness this signing ceremony of the partnership agreement for the Integrated Pig Farm in the Jilin Food Zone.

2 Allow me to congratulate the Thai company, Charoen Pokphand, and our Singapore companies, Ascendas-SingBridge and SATS, for taking their long-term partnership into the next phase - to develop an integrated value chain for pork production in Jilin. The consortium will eventually create modern and environmentally-sustainable pig farms, an abattoir, as well as a high-end processing plant. This is a bold vision that will reap benefits for all parties concerned, and propel Jilin forward in the development of its food production sector.

3 This collaboration has been made possible due to the efforts of both Singapore and Jilin, and has benefited from the support from Jilin City officials. It was their vision to develop the Jilin Food Zone into a model for food safety. This includes the establishment of an Integrated Food Safety System and a Foot-and-Mouth Disease-Free Zone. Taken together, these should add to a system of rigorous food safety that would meet national and international standards for food products coming from the Jilin Food Zone. In particular, I would like to thank Jilin City Party Secretary Zhang for his efforts in supporting the project over the past two years, especially after assuming the role of Party Secretary. I am confident that this project will receive a greater boost and move towards a higher goal.

4 Singapore has worked hand-in-hand with Jilin in order for the Jilin Food Zone to be a success. Our companies, Ascendas-SingBridge and SATS, have invested here. In addition, Singapore's Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) has helped to build up capabilities. For example, AVA's consultancy arm, Agri-Food Technologies Pte Ltd (ATP), has been providing consultancy services to the Jilin City Government to help establish the Integrated Food Safety System. AVA officers have also been stationed in Jilin to help guide Jilin City officials as they set up this system. AVA has also been assisting in the maintenance of Jilin's Foot-and-Mouth Disease-Free Zone.

5 In fact, this mutually beneficial project highlights the strong and cooperative relationship between Singapore and China, and it provides a platform which ensures food safety. As a small island, Singapore imports more than 90% of our food. We are always looking for new, quality and safe food sources to diversify. At the same time, Jilin wants to become a food producing and processing hub. I hope that the development of Jilin Food Zone will help boost Jilin's food industry, and in turn for Jilin food products to be exported overseas. Singapore is already importing Jilin rice – I had some last night, and it was indeed very tasty! And we will be bringing in Jilin millet soon. Eventually, the Jilin Food Zone can also produce corn, vegetables, dairy products, and fish, along with the pork that we expect to see from the Integrated Pig Farm. I hope that Singaporeans will be able to enjoy pork imported from Jilin soon.

6 With its fertile soil and plentiful land, Jilin is well-suited for primary food production. But the potential goes further beyond pork production. The Integrated Food Safety System – when fully completed – and the Disease-Free Zone will boost investor and consumer confidence in Jilin's development and its food produce. Eventually, Jilin can develop an entire food value chain, from upstream R&D, to downstream food processing and packaging, to distribution and export, which in turn will give boost to other related industries and transform Jilin into a high-end food hub that would help draw in even more investments and create more good jobs.

7 Allow me to end by thanking the Jilin City and Provincial Governments for their firm support in this joint venture. I also hope that Jilin leaders and officials will continue to support and develop the project, and take our bilateral collaborations to new heights.

8 Thank you.
