

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Good morning and thank you for being here.
2. As seen in the [video](#) earlier, we need to act early and decisively to tackle climate change. The tag line “Let’s Game Change Climate Change” builds on my Ministry’s campaigns over the past two years. In 2018, we launched the Year of Climate Action, and more than 340,000 people and organisations have pledged to take climate action. In 2019, we had a successful Year Towards Zero Waste, where we launched our inaugural Zero Waste Masterplan and the landmark Resource Sustainability Act was enacted. We will continue this momentum and work closely with our partners to game change climate change.

The Next Chapter - 2020: Singapore Food Story

3. This morning, we launch 2020: Singapore Food Story. We will focus our efforts on enhancing Singapore’s food security.
4. The allotment gardens you see around us reflects our community’s growing interest in gardening and planting edibles. Nearly 80 per cent of the gardening groups in HDB estates under NParks’ Community-in-Bloom programme grow edibles, such as fruits and vegetables.
5. Before we started urbanising in the 60s and 70s, we were self-sufficient in many types of food such as hen eggs, poultry meat and pork. But farming then was pollutive, backbreaking and low in productivity. Over the decades, farming in Singapore has declined significantly, until today, where we import over 90 per cent of our food and less than 1 per cent of our land is used for agriculture.
6. Such heavy reliance on food imports makes us vulnerable to short term disruptions arising from supply shortages, crop failures or animal diseases. We have proven resilient to such disruptions, largely thanks to the astute planning of then-AVA, and the logistics and connectivity of our transport network. That is why, when some Singaporeans started buying up food last Friday, and photos of empty supermarket shelves were circulated, we were able to say with full confidence that there is enough food for everyone. There is no risk of us running short of essential food and household items.
7. But climate change will seriously challenge our food supply strategy. All around the world, we see erratic weather, changes in crop growth patterns, water shortages, and other natural and human-related disasters, sometimes all happening close to and one after another. Population growth will further increase the stress on demand for food, at the same time when crop yields are projected to decline.

Food Security cannot be taken for granted

8. This is why Singapore cannot take food security for granted, nor can we rely on the same old game plan. While the Global Food Security Index assessed Singapore as one of the most food secure countries in the world, climate change requires us to act early; climate change requires us to game change food security.

9. We have made some early moves. Last April, the Singapore Food Agency, or SFA, was established under my Ministry, putting all food issues – from farm to fork under one agency. Our mission is to ensure a safe and secure supply of food for Singapore. It goes without saying that SFA will work closely with other agencies, the industry and the community to fulfill this broader mission.

10. Second, for better food security, we will move from standing on one leg of relying only on diversifying our food supply, to focusing on managing our food supply in three baskets; that is, we will: (i) diversify our food sources; (ii) support our companies to grow overseas; and (iii) grow local under our “30 by 30” vision. These three baskets are like the three legs of a tripod that will give stable support to our 2020 Singapore Food Story.

11. Our “30 by 30” vision is to grow enough food in Singapore to meet 30 per cent of our nutritional needs by 2030. This is by far the most ambitious leg to build. It is a big challenge, as we are aiming to meet these needs using less than 1 per cent of our land area in Singapore. However, this is also the most critical piece, much like enabling NEWater was a critical step in our pursuit of a resilient supply of water. If successful, the “30 by 30” vision also means that we will own technologies and unique processes that will become the value-add our companies can bring to growing food overseas, which is the second leg of our food security. This will require a whole-of-nation effort.

Game Change Food Security through the 3 Resiliences

12. To enhance Singapore’s food security, we will be guided by three Resiliences — Climate, Resource and Economic. Let me elaborate.

13. First, our food production must be resilient against changes in climate, weather and environment. Over the past five years, we have committed \$38 million from the Agriculture Productivity Fund, or APF, to support over 100 farms to raise productivity and be climate-resilient. The APF has supported vegetable farmers to adopt automated and climate control functions. Productivity levels have more than doubled on average to about 200 tonnes per hectare per year.

14. A recipient of the APF is Aquaculture Centre of Excellence Pte Ltd, or ACE. ACE has developed one of the world’s first purpose-built closed containment floating farm, which will reduce the fish’s vulnerability to external sea water conditions, while ensuring that used water is treated before being returned to the sea.

15. Second, to be resource-resilient, our farms must ensure high food yields on limited land, in a resource-efficient and sustainable manner. Advances such as in LED technology have significantly improved the energy-efficiency of indoor vegetable farms.

Many of our farms are developing high-rise production. Apollo, which grows fish entirely on land, is building a new eight-tier fish farm in Lim Chu Kang.

16. During our Year Towards Zero Waste, I called on companies to adopt circular economy approaches and turn our trash into treasure. Similarly, we should transform food waste and farms by-products into resources for other farms and companies. There are ongoing efforts to valorise food waste, such as using black soldier fly larvae to process food waste into animal feed and fertiliser; and converting tofu dregs into okara for use as animal feed and natural fertilisers for our farms.

17. Third, to be economically-resilient, we must capture value throughout the food supply chain. One of our local egg farms, N&N, has made good progress in achieving this. With the support of the APF, N&N developed automated systems to produce high quality eggs and invested in egg pasteurisation to provide assurance that its eggs are free of bacteria, even if half-cooked. N&N also produces egg products like Japanese onsen eggs, which are sold to supermarkets like Don Don Donki, and ready-to-eat eggs to 7-11 stores.

18. To achieve our three resiliences and enhance our food security, our farms must leverage on science, technology, and innovation. Food production is a promising area where our local researchers and start-ups can push the boundaries which, in turn, can provide new opportunities and good jobs for Singaporeans.

19. Last year, we announced that the National Research Foundation had committed \$144 million to fund agri-food research under the Singapore Food Story R&D Programme. We have since announced the first grant call for proposals for the research themes of ‘Sustainable Urban Food Production’ and ‘Future Foods: Alternative Proteins’. I hope Singapore can play a significant role in agri-food innovation, and help address our national and global challenges in food security.

20. It is only when we lead in new food growing paradigms amidst a challenging environment like climate change, that our companies can also develop partnerships with other countries from a position of strength. These extend to trade links in the areas of food supply chain, safety and technology. SFA and other agencies will invite investments to meet our “30 by 30” vision. We will also learn and exchange ideas with other countries.

21. I will share more plans about how we will achieve “30 by 30” next month at the Committee of Supply.

Need for Collective Effort

22. Now, let me turn to one critical success factor to make this three-food basket strategy work. It is what consumers can do to contribute to Singapore’s food security.

23. The answer is indeed a simple one — **support our local produce**. Local produce is grown close and at home: it is therefore safer, fresher and lasts longer. There is less

spoilage and food waste, as the produce does not need to travel for long periods of time before reaching the consumer. If you are a game changer for climate change, you will know this means a lower carbon footprint to bring food to your tables. Some farms are literally at your doorstep, such as the Citiponics rooftop vegetable farm at an Ang Mo Kio HDB multi-storey carpark.

Launch of New Local Produce Label

24. We want to make it easier for everyone to identify local produce.

25. Over the past year, SFA has consulted industry partners to design a good label to help people identify local produce. The label we are launching today is the result of consultation with farmers, retailers, industry associations and Singaporeans. Over 2,200 people participated in an on-line exercise, and almost 70 per cent expressed a preference for this design. The new label will be rolled out on local produce in August. Please look out for it, and support local produce when you shop. As we nourish our loved ones, we also help to strengthen Singapore's future.



26. SFA will continue to collaborate with retailers like NTUC FairPrice, Cold Storage and Prime Supermarket to organise joint promotions and display in-store branding collaterals with key messages to promote awareness of local produce.

27. To make local produce even more accessible, the Singapore Agro-Food Enterprises Federation (SAFEF), together with Lazada Redmart, has launched an e-SG Farmers' Market page with 17 farmers on-board the platform so far. This has increased the distribution channels of farmers and expanded the reach of Singapore's produce to more consumers through the e-commerce platform.

28. Our Singapore Food Story is a collective effort. Everyone has a role to play.

29. When you arrived at the event today, you would have seen seed packets being offered at the registration table. This is part of Ricoh Asia Pacific's community seed distribution initiative to work with partners like the Community Development Councils and schools to raise awareness of our "30 by 30" vision. We hope Ricoh's efforts will inspire other corporations to step forward.

30. Besides support from corporations, we also want to hear the voices of Singaporeans and co-create solutions together. SFA will form a Citizens' Workgroup to look into ways to increase demand for local produce. We will share more details at the upcoming Committee of Supply.

Conclusion

31. To conclude, food security is an existential challenge for Singapore. But it also offers many exciting opportunities for Singapore and we can create many good and green jobs for Singaporeans.

32. Just like what we have done for water, we can overcome our food challenge by planning and investing for the long term, and working together as a nation. Just like water, the technology we use for food security will also enable our companies to grow overseas with our unique value proposition.

33. Let me end by showing a video we have produced for today's event. I invite all of you and all Singaporeans to partner us to write the Singapore Food Story in 2020 and beyond. Together, let us game change food security.

National Archives of Singapore