

**SMS KOH POH KOON'S REMARKS AT MOF'S PRESS CONFERENCE
ON 21 JUNE, 10.30AM, AT NATIONAL PRESS CENTRE**

1 As a globally connected economy with a lack of natural resources, Singapore imports more than 90 per cent of our food supplies. As such, we are vulnerable to external shocks and supply disruptions which could happen unexpectedly and come from any source. Some of these reasons could be climate change impacting crop produce, global zoonotic outbreaks affecting farmed animals, or global pandemics causing supply chain issues. Geopolitical instability and foreign governments' policy changes can also have an impact on our food supplies. This is a global trend that affects many other countries, not just Singapore. Singapore has, in fact, encountered many of such food supply disruptions in the past, and we must expect that some of these disruptions can happen from time to time.

2 To mitigate the impact of some of these disruptions to our food supply, Singapore adopts a multi-pronged strategy to strengthen our food security. This includes increasing local production to act as a buffer and diversifying more of our food import sources.

3 In fact, we import food from more than 170 countries and regions and avoid excessive concentration of any food type, from any particular source. Import diversification mitigates the impact of disruptions from any single source and gives room for our importers to turn to alternative sources to maintain the stability of our food supply, and thereby strengthens our food security. We have been pushing our '30 by 30' vision, and this will help step up efforts to reduce our reliance on foreign imports by scaling up local production to act as a critical buffer for us.

4 The Government is aware that arising from recent events such as the Malaysian chicken export ban, some sectors in particular, have been badly hit. We are monitoring the situation very closely.

Support for chicken slaughterhouses

5 For example, chicken slaughterhouses whose employees' livelihoods depend on the slaughtering of live chickens have been directly impacted by Malaysia's ban on chicken exports.

6 As the main activity of the chicken slaughterhouses is to slaughter live chickens, most of the chicken slaughterhouses had to put their slaughtering staff on leave. To help preserve this industry capability amid the ban, the Government will provide one month of Foreign Worker Levy (FWL) waiver for the chicken slaughterhouses that are affected by Malaysia's chicken export ban. The Singapore Food Agency (SFA) will issue a circular with more information to these affected chicken slaughterhouses.

7 While the Government continues to facilitate the opening of new sources for food imports, we encourage the industry and companies to build resilience into their food supply networks by implementing suitable business continuity plans such as diversifying and maintaining warm links with alternate sources of supply. This would in turn protect their businesses from any unexpected supply shocks so that they can pivot much more quickly.

Support for hawkers and wet market stallholders selling chicken

8 The Government recognises that hawkers selling chicken products and market stallholders selling poultry have been affected by the ban on chicken exports in Malaysia. We have been working closely with industry partners and trade associations to quickly ramp up alternative supplies of chicken. We have also linked up affected hawkers and market stallholders with the Meat Traders Association Singapore to switch to frozen or thawed frozen chicken, as alternatives. In fact, many have done so and shown great resilience amidst this disruption.

9 The majority of the poultry market stalls and chicken rice stalls have remained open, and have been able to diversify and pivot to sell or use thawed frozen chicken or fresh kampung or black chicken. NEA has received some appeals from those who continue to face challenges in pivoting and is actively assisting these stallholders.

10 The Government will continue to monitor the situation closely, paying full attention to the supply situation, and stands ready to provide further support if needed. We urge all stallholders and businesses to adapt and support one another in finding new sources, new channels and think about new business models.

11 Let me conclude by reassuring stallholders who continue to face financial difficulties that they can also tap on existing schemes such as ComCare or the COVID-19 recovery grant. They may also approach the National Environment Agency (NEA) or Social Service Offices (SSO) for assistance if needed.

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