

Local production key to ensuring stable food supply

We refer to Mr Lance Wu's letter (Increase demand for local produce, April 26).

With more than 90 per cent of our food imported, Singapore is vulnerable to external factors such as the volatilities of the global food market. Hence, the Singapore Food Agency (SFA) has been investing in local production to mitigate our reliance on imports and which can serve as a buffer during supply disruptions. Our goal is to achieve "30 by 30" – to produce 30 per cent of our nutritional needs locally by 2030, up from less than 10 per cent today.

To do so, we will leverage technology that allows us to grow more with less.

SFA has been providing strong funding support to the local agri-food industry to adopt such technologies, such as through our \$63 million Agriculture Productivity Fund, which has benefited 110 farms as of the end of last month.

To further drive innovations, we launched grant calls last December for research and development (R&D) in sustainable urban food production and alternative proteins, under the \$144 million Singapore Food Story R&D Programme.

A \$30 million 30x30 Express grant was also established earlier this month to accelerate the ramping up of local production in eggs, leafy vegetables and fish over

the next six to 24 months. Local agri-food players can tap the grant to defray upfront costs to expand their production capacity.

Since 2017, we have been awarding agriculture land, through a competitive land tender basis, to agri-food companies with promising technologies. Additionally, SFA has been looking to unlock more alternative spaces to grow food locally and harness technological innovations.

Next month, we will be launching a tender of rooftop spaces on HDB multi-storey carparks for urban farming.

While we work with the industry to boost local production, demand from consumers is equally

important to sustain a healthy agri-food ecosystem.

To make it easier for consumers to identify local produce, we will also be introducing a new Local Produce logo, which can be found on local produce in retail shops and supermarkets from the middle of this year.

We are also launching a citizens' workgroup to co-create with citizens and find ways to increase demand for local produce. We encourage consumers to select local produce as it is safe, fresher, lasts longer and has a lower carbon footprint.

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INCREASE DEMAND FOR LOCAL PRODUCE

As Covid-19 disrupts our traditional food supply lines (From tomatoes to grapes, avid gardener treasures home-grown food, April 9), efforts should be made to increase both production and desirability of locally produced foodstuff.

Singapore needs to be prudent in managing its resources. As its land area is limited, more resources should be given to new technologies that can help to increase yield - such as vertical farming and high-tech farms. Existing farms should also be given incentives to improve yields. All this will be a step in the right direction for Singapore.

To increase demand for local food produce, give subsidies to producers to lower prices to compete with cheaper imports. Campaigns to encourage purchase of local produce and to promote local production can also be implemented. By increasing the demand for local produce, producers will be incentivised to increase production in the long run.

Increasing production and demand should bring Singapore closer to realising its "30 by 30" goal - to produce enough food here to meet 30 per cent of its nutritional needs by 2030.

Lance Wu, 20 Pre-university student