

Local produce • New alliance to look into demand and supply

We thank Mr Liu Fook Thim for his support for local produce and feedback on local vegetable farms (Set up cooperative for local vegetable farms, March 18).

Mr Liu asked if selling local produce directly to eateries and caterers is a better strategy for local vegetable farms, given their larger and more consistent demand. He also suggested setting up a cooperative to achieve economies of scale.

We are pleased to inform Mr Liu that a new Alliance for Action on Demand Offtake and Consumer Education was formed last month to look into demand and supply aggregation of local produce and build greater support for local produce through consumer education.

Led by the industry and supported by the Singapore Food Agency, the alliance brings together stakeholders to co-create practical solutions to aggregate

supply from farms and match demand from commercial offtakers such as hotels, restaurants and caterers. The alliance will also look into forming a cooperative or supplier aggregator arrangement.

Besides commercial offtakers, we also encourage consumers to support local produce. Consumers can support locally farmed produce by looking out for the red

SG Fresh Produce badges displayed on the packaging of produce or next to it when shopping for groceries.

All of us, be it the Government, industry, or consumers, have a part to play in strengthening Singapore's food security. Local production is key in our food security strategy, as it helps to mitigate the impact of supply disruptions and reduce our reliance on imported food.

Cheong Lai Peng

Senior Director (Industry Development & Community Partnership)
Singapore Food Agency

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Farming • Set up cooperative for local vegetable farms

The founder of local rooftop farm ComCrop, Mr Allan Lim, was right to ask: "What role do local farms play in the whole ecosystem?" (What will it take for shoppers to buy local vegetables?, March 13).

The authorities encouraged entrepreneurs to set up farms to produce home-grown greens that are pesticide-free and eco-friendly to increase the supply from local sources. But at what cost?

Some of the 110 vegetable farms now realise that their ventures are increasingly unprofitable, given that their business models are unrealistic in trying to get Singapore consumers to pay double the price they pay for imported vegetables.

The role of local vegetable farming in the food ecosystem needs to change. Would selling direct to eateries and caterers, with their larger volumes and more consistent demand, be a better strategy for local farms?

Instead of letting each vegetable farm struggle on its own, perhaps setting up a cooperative to achieve economies of scale would be a more viable approach.

Liu Fook Thim