

Keynote Address by Dr Tan Lee Kim, Director-General, Food Administration and Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Singapore Food Agency at the Virtual Launch Event of the Clean and Green Standard for Urban Farms (Agriculture) on 25 March 2021

Mr Sim Choon Siong, Executive Director of Enterprise Singapore
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon. I am pleased to officiate the launch of the Singapore Standard for Clean and Green Urban Farms – Agriculture, or SS 661, today.

2 The Clean and Green Standard is a timely one, as we set our sights on building a more sustainable future under the Singapore Green Plan unveiled just last month. One of the key pillars under this plan is “Resilient Future”, where we aim to safeguard and strengthen our food security through local food production.

3 You would be familiar with our ‘30 by 30’ goal, which is to produce 30% of our nutritional needs locally by 2030. This is more than a three-fold increase from our current level of production. To do this, we will need to make efficient use of our resources to grow more within our highly urbanised and densely built-up living environment. This is especially pertinent in the face of climate change, which will put further strain on our limited resources.

Increasing local production sustainably

4 The new Standard that we are launching today is a set of best practices and farm management system to ensure the production of clean and green farm produce. It sets out the criteria that urban vegetable farms have to meet in terms of farm management, techniques and practices to achieve a clean and green production system. Clean in that it does not use farm inputs such as synthetic pesticides, and green in that there is efficient use of farm inputs and natural resources which minimise impact on the environment.

5 The Standard will also help urban farms adopt smart farming techniques and practices to reduce wastage of resources, incorporate circularity in their resource management, and optimise operational efficiency. This will boost our local food production and contribute towards our '30 by 30' goal. It will also ensure that our local food supply remains resilient in the face of wider trends, such as resource scarcity and climate change.

Strengthening Singapore's reputation for quality produce

6 With this new Standard, local urban farms will be recognised for producing safe, quality food, using resource-efficient practices in a clean and sustainable environment. Farms that adopt the new Clean and Green Standard can be certified and awarded a Quality Mark. This will allow them to differentiate and brand their produce, and further strengthen Singapore's reputation for quality produce.

7 It will also serve as a mark of assurance to consumers that the produce from these farms is not only free from synthetic pesticides but is also grown sustainably in a clean environment. This will put our farms in a better position to cater to the increasing demand from consumers for safe, quality and sustainable farm produce. It will also provide consumers with an added incentive to buy and support local produce. Farms can gain market share locally and build on the Singapore brand of quality to access new markets overseas.

8 I encourage our urban farms to adopt the Standard and go through the certification. I understand that a few urban farms such as ComCrop, Hydro Urban, MEOD and Livfresh have expressed interest to adopt the new Standard.

9 Farms will be pleased to know that they can tap on the new \$60 million Agri-Food Cluster Transformation (ACT) Fund for co-funding expenses related to the new Standard. This includes the purchase of equipment and certification-related fees. The ACT Fund will be open for application later this year.

10 To facilitate the adoption of the Standard, we have worked with Republic Polytechnic (RP) to develop a training course to help farms better understand the

technical requirements under the Standard. I understand RP will be sharing more details of the training course later.

11 On the demand side, SFA will continue to work with local farmers and the industry to promote local produce, including raising public awareness of the new Clean and Green Standard. Consumer demand is critical in ensuring the commercial viability of our local farms. Consumers play an important role in the growth and sustainability of our farming industry.

Conclusion

12 I would like to thank everyone involved for your contributions in developing the new Clean and Green Standard, which will enable our urban farms to tap on new growth opportunities, and contribute towards our efforts in realising the Singapore Green Plan and our '30 by 30' goal. There is potential for us to achieve more, and I am confident that there will be more milestones to follow.

14 SFA looks forward to continuing to work with our farmers and other industry players to achieve a high-tech and sustainable agri-food sector and enhance Singapore's food security. Thank you.