

AVAvision



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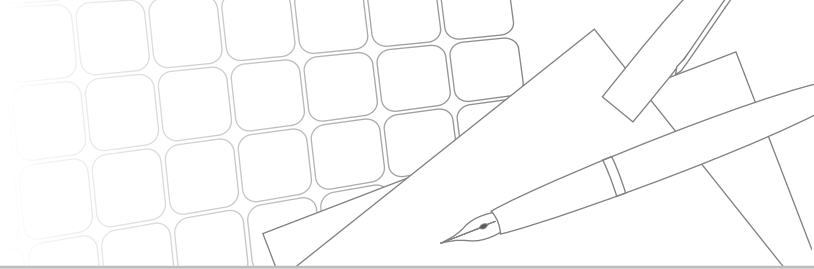
The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) held its biggest-ever Responsible Pet Ownership (RPO) Roadshow, themed "Be a Responsible Pet Owner" at the Singapore Expo from 7 to 9 November 2008. Graced by Guest-of-Honour, Parliamentary Secretary for National Development, Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman, this annual anchor event for the RPO Public Education Programme attracted more than 6,000 visitors and pet owners.

Dr Maliki together with Chairman, AVA, Mr Koh Soo Keong and Deputy CEO, AVA, Dr Chew Siang Thai launched the event on Friday, 7 November. Prizes were presented to the winners of the Pocket Calendar Design Competition 2008. Nine Animal Welfare Groups together with St Anthony's Cannosian Convent Secondary School also received tokens of appreciation for their active participation and support at the event.

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Corporate Cuts



AVA Receives Prestigious MND Minister's Team Award for Keeping Singapore Free from Bird Flu



AVA officers recognised for their commitment and dedication in keeping Singapore bird flu-free

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) received the Ministry of National Development (MND) Minister's Team Award from the Minister for National Development, Mr Mah Bow Tan on 14 November 2008. This prestigious award recognises officers from the MND family for their sterling public service contributions that have significantly impacted Singaporeans and served to advance our national interest. The AVA team was commended for their effective

control of bird flu in Kepri, a group of Indonesian islands close to Singapore.

Since 2003, bird flu outbreaks have been regularly reported in Indonesia. To date, Indonesia has reported the highest number of human bird flu deaths in the world. Owing to its close proximity to Singapore, uncontrolled raging bird flu outbreaks in Kepri could potentially spread to Singapore.

AVA spearheaded the Kepri assistance project with the key objective to keep Kepri and ultimately Singapore free from bird flu. The involvement helped AVA extend its control measures outwards to control outbreaks in Kepri as well as to obtain early information of outbreaks.

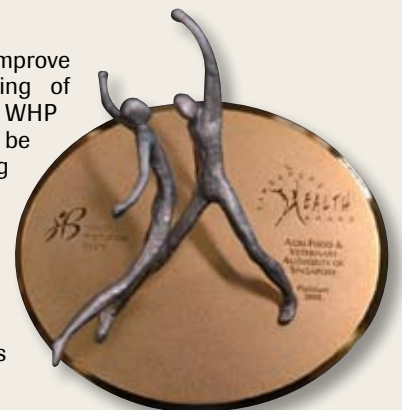
As bird flu control required multiple strategies, officers from various disciplines and expertise were involved in this Kepri assistance programme. The officers conducted trainings and helped develop disease control programs and strategies. With AVA's assistance, Kepri has managed to remain largely free from bird flu for more than a year. Kepri is one of few provinces in Indonesia that is currently free from bird flu. By helping our neighbours, the team has effectively kept our borders safe from bird flu and safeguarded the health of Singaporeans.

Platinum Award Exemplifies AVA's Commendable Workplace Health Promotion Programmes

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) received its first Platinum Singapore HEALTH (Helping Employees Achieve Life-Time Health) Award on 20 November 2008. Presented by the Health Promotion Board, this award recognises organisations for their excellent and sustainable workplace health promotion (WHP) programmes.

Strong and committed leadership, dedicated health facilitators, a responsive workforce and a supportive corporate culture that embraces healthy living were factors that contributed to the success of AVA's workplace health excellence.

In its ongoing effort to improve the health and well-being of employees through WHP programmes, AVA will be focusing on combating hypertension through a range of activities that include: monthly fitness exercises at three major worksites, healthy lifestyle talks and workshops, health checks and healthier food tours.





Food Security Issues Addressed at AMAF & AMAF+3 Meetings



Parliamentary Secretary for National Development, Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman led a delegation of officers from the Ministry of National Development and Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority to attend the 30th Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) and the 8th Meeting of the AMAF+3 (AMAF+3) held on 23 October and 24 October in Hanoi, Vietnam respectively.

The recent developments of soaring food prices, global financial crisis and an increasing concern on food security in the ASEAN region led to the discussion of the socio-economic impacts on food, agriculture and forestry sectors in ASEAN during the meeting. The AMAF Ministers agreed that ASEAN needs to take a strategic and comprehensive approach and apply concrete policy measures in promoting and maintaining regional food security catering to the long-term need and potential emergency situation. This could be achieved through increased food production and innovation, while in tandem, ensuring market efficiency and regional integration process, and trading mechanism. Toward this end, a comprehensive ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework and its medium-term Strategic Plan of Action on ASEAN Food Security was adopted. The Ministers also supported the Rice Action Plan of the International Rice Research Institute and urged close cooperation and partnership among regional and international organisations in addressing food security in the region.

The following ASEAN standards and plan were endorsed during the meeting:

- a) ASEAN Phytosanitary Guidelines for the Importation of Milled Rice;
- b) ASEAN harmonised Maximum Residue Limits for 9 pesticides;
- c) ASEAN Harmonised Standards for Guava, Lansium, Mandarin, Mangosteen and Watermelon;
- d) ASEAN Standard Requirements for five animal vaccines;
- e) ASEAN Criteria for Accreditation of Meat Processing Establishment; and
- f) Work Plan for Strengthening Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in ASEAN.

In response to the impact of global warming on the environment and human life, the Ministers welcomed the initiative on ASEAN Strategy in Addressing the Impact of Climate Change on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

To express their support in further strengthening food security under the ASEAN Plus Three cooperation, the Ministers agreed to accelerate the implementation of the East Asia Emergency Rice Reserve Pilot Project and to extend it for one more year until 28 February 2010.

New project proposals from the Plus Three Countries, which aim to build capacity in various aspects such as food security, agricultural statistical analysis, food safety and standards, post-harvest management, plant quarantine, agricultural extension and sustainable biomass utilisation were also endorsed at the meeting.



AVA Aces in Food Safety and Biosecurity Programmes



CEO, AVA, Dr Chua Sin Bin together with the IAC panel taking questions from the floor at the Technical Seminar

Singapore's food safety and biosecurity systems continued to be amongst the best in the world, and that the approaches adopted were top class". This was the verdict given by the International Advisory Committee of Experts (IAC) panel on the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority's (AVA's) effectiveness in food safety, animal and plant health programmes and contingency planning for disease outbreaks. This is the fourth review meeting of Singapore's food safety and biosecurity programmes by the IAC.

Appointed by AVA, the four-member IAC panel comprised Dr Gardner Murray, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Asia, the Far East and Oceania and Adviser to the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Dr Thomas Ksiazek, Chief of Special Pathogens Branch of the Centers for Disease Control, Atlanta, USA; Prof Dirk Pfeiffer, Head of Veterinary Epidemiology Division at the Royal Veterinary College, University of London UK; and Mr Robert Griffin, Director of Plant Epidemiology and Risk Analysis Laboratory at the US Department of Agriculture. The IAC members are leading experts in the areas of plant and veterinary epidemiology, food safety and hygiene, biosecurity and animal and plant health.

Held from 20 to 21 August 2008, the latest IAC review covered a range of issues including AVA's risk management approach to the control of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) or bird flu, rabies and plant pests and diseases. The panel also considered AVA's policies and plans in ensuring food safety for processed food as well as fast-tracking approval for import of gourmet meat products.

Findings and Recommendations of the IAC

The IAC were pleased to note that since its first review in 2002, AVA had continued to strengthen and improve its approaches in a range of areas including:

- i) risk analysis and risk management; and offshore work

- ii) epidemiology and surveillance;
- iii) laboratory approaches;
- iv) emergency preparedness and methodologies for emergency management;
- v) staff training, and
- vi) communications and scientific publications

The IAC commended AVA on its progressive shift from a zero or negligible risk approach to a science-based managed risk approach. This has enhanced our supply resilience by allowing food to be sourced from more countries, including areas where notifiable diseases are endemic. Through judicious application of appropriate risk mitigating measures, such as regionalisation and compartmentalisation, AVA ensures that food safety is not compromised.

The IAC were particularly impressed with AVA's efforts to keep out bird flu and supported its enhanced measures of biosegregation and pre-export requirements for ducks, ornamental and pet birds, and limits for backyard chickens. They also commended the organisation on its assistance towards Kepri in helping to keep it as a HPAI-controlled zone.

The panel also provided valuable feedback to further strengthen AVA's approaches to enhancing food safety for processed food; managing the risk of gourmet meat imports; preventing rabies and monitoring and surveillance of plant pests and diseases. AVA was encouraged to enhance its risk-based approaches in view of increasing global risk of emerging and re-emerging diseases and foodborne pathogens, and the need to expand Singapore's sources of food supply. The IAC also reiterated the need to continuously engage the industry and consumers in complementing the Government's efforts in managing food safety and bio-security risks. AVA was also encouraged to focus on specific areas such as assuming a leadership role in regional activities, enhancing its approach to risk analysis and auditing capabilities, as well as improving staff competencies through training and practical experience.



Technical Seminar

In conjunction with the IAC review, AVA organised a technical seminar on “Risk Management for Food Safety, Animal Health and Plant Health” for the industry. The topics covered by the IAC panel during the seminar included: “The critical importance of risk management in biosecurity matters”, “Communication between Policy and Science: Modelling for informing policy development”, “Updates on new developments in our understanding of Henipah viruses since the 1999 Nipah virus outbreak in Malaysia” and “Effectiveness of current ISPM 15 Treatments for solid wood packaging in trade and Phasing out of Methyl bromide – Alternatives and Implications”.

The technical seminar was well attended by some 150 participants and saw lively exchange of questions during the Question and Answer session. The audience found the seminar to be beneficial as they now have a better understanding on the risk management with regard to food safety, animal and plant health.

AVA Implements Optical Watermark System on Export Certificates

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority's (AVA's) online services took a leap forward on 14 July 2008 with the implementation of the optical watermark system on the following export certificates:

- export health certificates for ornamental fish and live food fish
- food export certificates for various food products
- free sale certificates for various food products and animal feed
- veterinary certificates for animals and animal products
- certificate of freedom from disease

These certificates are currently issued under the Electronic Certificate, Licence and Permit System (eCLiPS), where customers apply for their certificates electronically. With the newly implemented optical watermark system, customers can now print the completed certificates in the comfort of their own homes and offices.

The certificates issued with the optical watermark can be distinguished from those previously issued by AVA by the following security features:

- The optical watermark consists of two features, a visible watermark and an invisible watermark. The visible watermark displays the AVA logo, while the invisible watermark has the word “COPY”. Both the visible and invisible watermark will be embedded into the document and printed together with the document on a laser print.
- When photocopied, the visible watermark (i.e. AVA logo) will deteriorate, while the invisible

watermark will appear. To verify that a document is a photocopied version of the original document, one only has to check that either the visible watermark is blurred or the invisible watermark is clearly seen. No special decoding equipment is required for this verification process of the watermark as the watermark is visible to the naked eye.

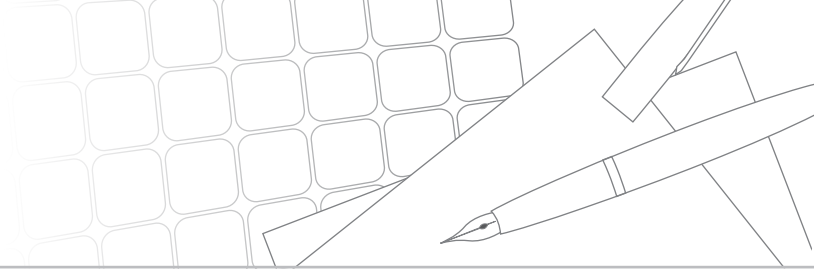
- In addition, there is a micro printing at the top right hand side of the certificate. The micro printing appears to be a very fine line on the certificate and can only be viewed under a magnifying glass. The microprint comprises a repeating string of the certificate number. It will appear distorted when photocopied, to detect any unauthorised reproduction of the document.
- The authorised signature on certificates bearing the optical watermark will be electronically applied, and not signed by hand. There will be no signature on the certificate attachments.

To allay concerns from importing parties regarding the authenticity of the watermarked certificate, AVA has embedded the certificate information into a 2D Barcode. Importing parties can verify the authenticity of the certificate by scanning the 2D Barcode and uploading the image for decoding using AVA's Online Certificate Verification System.

AVA has written to its overseas counterparts prior to the implementation, and also issued a notification through the World Trade Organization to ensure dissemination and acceptance of the watermarked certificates by our trading partners.



Corporate Cuts



9th AVA Technical Seminar Addresses Role of Technology in Food Supply



Insightful presentation by an AVA researcher



Participants sampling AVA's latest farmed fish variety, Cobia

The 9th Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) Technical Seminar, themed, "Role of Technology in Food Supply" was held on 26 September 2008 with a special focus on food-related issues, addressing current challenges of soaring food prices and supply shortage.

During his opening speech, CEO, AVA, Dr Chua Sin Bin highlighted on Singapore's strategic position amidst fertile and resource-rich lands in the world and the possibility to leverage on our intellectual resources to spark new agri-technological developments for adoption by the region and beyond.

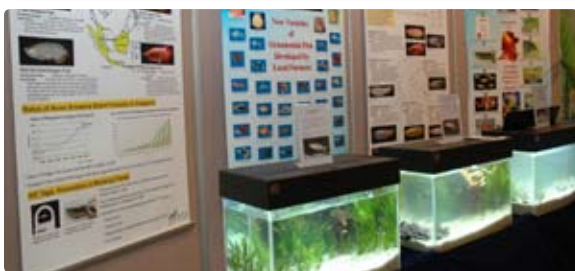
Dr Chua offered two new dimensions that could help advance our agricultural R & D efforts. The first, being the economics dimension, helps us look beyond the technical aspect of agricultural R & D and experiment with more innovative approaches in providing food in a radically urbanised world. Initiatives to increase productivity through catalysing business developments in relation to food supply were highly encouraged.

The second dimension aims to step up the organisation's participation in agri-technology developments by other

players so as to create a wider R & D base. AVA, as the lead agency for agriculture and food production technologies, will continue to identify and support appropriate players, whether academia, private sector, other government agencies, or in-house to undertake specific R & D projects.

Besides ensuring a resilient food supply, Dr Chua underscored the importance of maintaining vigilance on emerging food safety hazards in view of recent incidents of contaminated food and also in developing our diagnostic testing capability and surveillance in animal health.

Three invited speakers from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Economic Development Board and Intervet Schering Plough Animal Health, and five AVA researchers also shared their perspectives on the role of technology in food supply and research findings during the seminar. The event was attended by 150 AVA staff and invited guests from the academia, government agencies and agri-business sectors. Posters and mini-exhibits were also put up at the foyer of the auditorium showcasing some of AVA's work in the aquaculture, horticulture and ornamentals industries.



Mini exhibits showcased AVA's involvement in the different industries



ATP, NTUC Fairprice Jointly Develop Singapore's First Industry-Driven Organic Assurance Programme

The AgriFood Technologies Pte Ltd (ATP), a fully-owned private subsidiary company of the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA), collaborated with NTUC Fairprice to develop the NTUC FairPrice Organic Assurance Program (NOAP) and provided third party independent audit services for NTUC's 'Pasar Organic' produce range.

Launched on 31 July 2008, 'Pasar Organic' is FairPrice's new house brand for Asian organic vegetables. To ensure the integrity of the organic produce from farm to store, FairPrice collaborated with ATP to develop NOAP, the first industry-driven organic assurance programme developed in Singapore. NOAP's practices are based on recommendations from the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements and the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

To ensure compliance with NOAP's organic production and handling standards, ATP conducts stringent audit checks from the farms and packing house in Thailand to NTUC Fairprice's Fresh Food



Consumers can now look forward to a wider range of affordable Asian organic vegetables

Distribution Centre and retail stores in Singapore. The supply organic farms in Thailand have also received the Organic Thailand Agriculture Standards Certification.

The ATP and NTUC FairPrice collaboration has enabled Singaporeans to enjoy a wider range of affordable Asian organic vegetables. There are currently close to 30 types of Asian vegetables produced under the Pasar Organic label complying with NOAP standards.

Business Mission to Latin America Creates New Business Opportunities and Strengthens Existing Ties



Visit to establishment in Lima, Peru where asparagus were sorted and packed

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) together with 11 representatives from nine Singapore companies participated in a business mission to Latin America organised by IE Singapore from 27th May to 9th June 2008.

The delegation visited 24 companies dealing with diverse food products such as meats like poultry, beef and pork; fruits and vegetables like grapes, mango and asparagus; and seafood and eggs in Peru, Brazil and Mexico. Business seminars were also organised in the three countries to provide business matching opportunities with local companies there, which were interested to export food to Singapore but which the group could not visit due to distance and time constraints.

The participants provided positive feedback that they had benefited tremendously from the mission. Through this trip, they were able to meet up with existing and new suppliers, build on existing partnerships as well as explore new opportunities. The visits to production and processing establishments have also allowed them to see the quality of the produce available.



Trade Delegation Visits Vietnam, a Top Ten Global Seafood Exporter

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) co-organised a trade mission to Vietnam with IE Singapore and the Seafood Industries Association Singapore from 10 to 13 June 2008. This 20-member strong delegation comprised 15 seafood industry representatives from 11 companies and five accompanying government officers.

Vietnam's strength in seafood production, processing and export makes it one of the top 10 global exporters of seafood products, such as frozen/dried/fried fish and fish products, frozen shrimp, frozen/dried cuttlefish and frozen octopus. South Vietnam, in particular, offers a wide variety of export-quality seafood products that are processed in hygienic plants observing stringent international standards.

The delegation travelled to Ho Chi Minh City, Kien Giang and Ca Mau, and visited six seafood processing facilities and a small, local fish port. The group also took the opportunity to attend an international seafood trade exhibition, VietFish 2008, in Ho Chi Minh City where they met with key exporters, including the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers.

The well-established seafood processing factories visited were already exporting their products to overseas markets such as America, Europe, Korea, Japan and had internationally recognised certifications, such as HACCP, ISO 9001:2000, and EU Codes. Before being allowed access to view the processing operations in the factories,



Workers handling fish for surimi processing

participants had to adhere to the factories' stringent hygiene rules. They were donned in protective gear (e.g. hair nets, masks, laboratory coats, boots) and underwent disinfection.

Introductory meetings with the companies indicated keen interest to forge links and explore export opportunities of seafood products to Singapore. The delegation found that the relatively low manpower cost, good hygiene standards and availability of raw materials make South Vietnam a viable, alternative source of supply for frozen seafood, in particular frozen surimi. Resulting from this trade mission was a combined order from a number of Singapore seafood companies for a substantial volume of frozen surimi, totalling approximately half a million Singapore dollars.



Delegation attending VietFish 2008



Study Trip to North Sumatra Widens Singapore's Supply Net

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority together with the Singapore Fruits & Vegetables Importers and Exporters Association conducted a study trip to the North Sumatra province in July 2008. The objectives of this trip included learning more about the commercial farm and facilities set up for the supply of quality vegetables to Singapore and seeking possible agri-business opportunities.

During this trip, the group visited promising vegetable farms and processing centres in the highland regencies of North Sumatra, namely Karo, Dairi and Simalungun. Participants expressed interest in importing tomatoes, spinach, sweet potatoes and ginger as well as pineapple from farms in Dairi and Simalungun.

Participants were impressed by the farms' good infrastructure and excellent production and postharvest technology and methodology. Coupled with the region's ability to produce both lowland and highland crops, and supply produce all year-round, North Sumatra has great

potential to be a major alternative source for vegetable supply to Singapore.



Visit to the Hortijaya Processing Centre where tomatoes are sorted for the Singapore market

Virginia Horticulture Centre Delegation Visits Singapore for Possible Collaboration Opportunities

As a follow-up to the visit made in January 2008 by the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) and the Singapore Fruits & Vegetables Importers and Exporters Association (SFVIEA) to South Australia, a delegation from the Virginia Horticulture Centre (VHC) visited Singapore in July to better understand the local market and seek possible collaboration opportunities arising from the Memorandum of Understanding signed. Led by the CEO of VHC, Mr Mike Redmond, the delegation comprised growers of salad vegetables and herbs, mushroom, capsicum, and tomato.

Jointly organised by AVA and the South Australian Government Singapore Office, the visit commenced with a courtesy call at AVA, followed by a visit to the Pasir Panjang Wholesale Centre to observe AVA officers collecting vegetable samples for testing at the pesticide residue laboratory. The delegation was impressed with the speed of result dissemination on pesticide residue violation. During the trip, the

group also discussed with members of the SFVIEA on Singapore's demand for imported vegetables and fruits, and factors affecting trade in Australian fresh produce. The delegation was heartened to learn that there is local demand for Australia's quality and safe produce despite the higher prices. The group also discussed the possibility of joint ventures in leveraging on our neighbouring countries' suitable climate and, cost-effective land and manpower resources as a production base for exporting produce to Singapore.

Visits were also made to local vegetable farms, major supermarket chains such as NTUC FairPrice, Cold Storage and Sheng Siong supermarkets as well as institution buyers like the Singapore Food Industry and the Singapore Airport Terminal Services Limited kitchen. The VHC delegation found the visits to be well-organised and informative, and were confident of the potential to export Australian produce to Singapore.



Animal Agenda



AVA's Responsible Pet Ownership Public Education Efforts Peak at Roadshow 2008

...Con't [Cover Story]



I do, I do. I pledge to be a responsible pet owner.

Pet Ownership – A Life-time Commitment

Pets have become a part of many Singaporeans' life. Over the last ten years, pet ownership has risen nearly 50%. Sadly, pet abandonment has also been rife. Each year, thousands of people give up or abandon their pets for reasons ranging from loss of interest, to lack of resources to care for the pet. The end result is suffering for the homeless, unwanted animals, as only a handful are fortunate enough to find new homes. Pet abandonment also adds to the stray animal population.

AVA actively promotes responsible pet ownership and animal welfare through public education efforts such as roadshow, talks, exhibitions and publications. This year's theme, "Be a Responsible Pet Owner" reminds existing and prospective pet owners that owning a pet requires commitment to care for the pet. It involves providing the pet with food, shelter, exercise, grooming, and even training. Apart from these, responsible pet ownership also entails being considerate towards those who do not own pets or are afraid of animals.

Throughout the three-day roadshow, the key message of responsible pet ownership was reinforced through the attractive displays, quizzes, stage activities and demonstrations. During the event, pet owners were also encouraged to make a pledge to care for their pet, for life. This event has been an excellent platform for many to celebrate the joy of pet ownership and also served as a

timely reminder that a pet is for life, it requires a lifetime of commitment and care.



One of the winners from the Pocket Calendar Design Competition 2008 with Guest-of-Honour, Parliamentary Secretary for National Development, Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman








Having a whale of a time at the Kiddy Corner



BE A CONSIDERATE PET OWNER

Responsible pet ownership is the prerequisite for happy and healthy pets, happy owners, and happy communities. Pet owners need to be mindful of and be considerate to those around them, including respecting those who do not like pets. It is only when responsible pet ownership is demonstrated that society's tolerance for pets will increase.

You can be a considerate pet owner by:

-  Training your pet so that it does not become a nuisance to others
-  Cleaning up after your pet and discarding your pet's waste properly
-  Not allowing your pet to stray
-  Preventing your pet from dirtying common areas or your neighbours' property
-  Not bringing your pets to places where they are not allowed (eg. eating establishments)

If you are a dog owner, please remember to leash your pet in public places. Train and socialise your dog so that it does not bark excessively.



Age is no barrier to participate in the fun RPO games



Obedience training sessions drew the crowd in droves

AVA Reviews Policy and Tightens Regulations on Potentially Dangerous Dogs

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) will be reviewing its policies and provisions that apply to potentially dangerous dogs. In our densely populated environment where people and pets come in close interaction, the need for dogs to be well controlled and managed is imperative. An aggressive dog, particularly a large one on the loose, poses a threat to people and other pets, and could potentially cause serious injuries.

In view of reports on serious dog bite incidents occurring from time to time, around the world, the policy review will address the community's concerns on the risk of such attacks in Singapore. This will include the review of the breeds listed in the Schedule under the Dog Licensing and Control Rules as well as the conditions imposed for keeping such breeds. Completion of the review is expected in 2009.



Plant Picks



AVA Wows Crowd at Singapore Garden Festival 2008 with Spectacular Display



Visitors captivated by the variety of vegetables in the show



Minister and Mrs Mah admiring the vegetable displays

Organised by the National Park Board and supported by key partners such as the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA), Orchid Society of Southeast Asia, Singapore Gardening Society and Singapore Tourism Board, the Singapore Garden Festival (SGF) 2008 made its return on 25 July 2008 after a successful inaugural show two years back.

The first garden show in the tropics, the SGF showcases creations from the world's top award-winning garden and floral designers. During this eight-day show, AVA set up three impressive displays under the following themes: Vegetable Garden Display (Veggie Garden), Clinic Botanica and Plant Passport Service.

Vegetable Garden Display (Veggie Garden)

Aimed to educate and promote cultivation of vegetables in urban homes, the Veggie Garden's attractive display enthralled onlookers with its aesthetic and palatable produce. The plots of herbs, leafy and fruited vegetables were presented as shining diamonds, lit by internal rope lights. Thrilled by the sight, many snapped pictures of the brinjal, okra and corn plants, and kept AVA officers busy with queries on how to grow the aromatic herbs like basil and dill, as well as leafy greens like *gailan* and lettuce.



Cultivating the interest of young and budding green fingers

Clinic Botanica

Visitors at the Plant Clinic learnt of common plant pests, insects, diseases and nutritional problems that ail the trees, vegetables, orchids and other garden and indoor plants. Many also seized the opportunity to consult the AVA 'Plant Doctors' on plant health problems and sought advice on what could be done to keep their plants healthy.



More than meets the eye - pests and diseases lurking beneath the lush vegetation



Plant Doctor at work



Curious students examining the display

Launch of eBook "Guide to Vegetable Growing"

AVA's eBook, "Guide to Vegetable Growing" also debuted at the show. In launching the eBook, AVA's CEO, Dr Chua Sin Bin, commented, "Young Singaporeans are more accustomed to getting their vegetables from supermarkets rather than from the land. As a result, many have little or no idea of vegetable cultivation. This guide on vegetable growing could help revitalize the fun of growing your food ... as well as providing essential vegetable growing skills to those with green fingers."

Some of the interesting topics covered in this well-illustrated and user-friendly eBook include:

- A quick reference to the common vegetables in Singapore
- Planting and maintenance of leafy vegetables
- Soil and fertilizer management of vegetables
- Diseases of vegetables

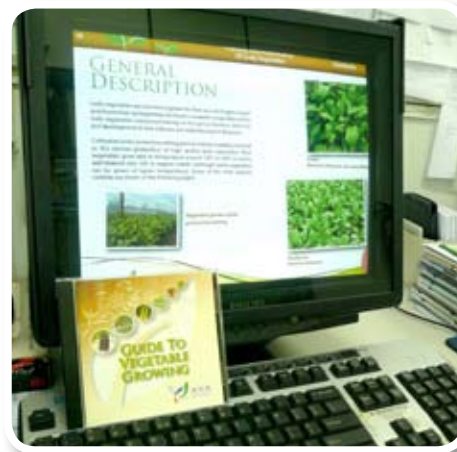
- Insects and pests of vegetables
- Management and control of plant pests and diseases

Best practices used for successful vegetable cultivation were also highlighted in the book. These served as timely educational aid to the novice and useful reference to the serious grower.

Judging by how quickly the eBooks were snapped up by visitors, it may not be long before we start seeing fresh vegetables sprouting from balconies and home gardens in Singapore!



The eBook, "Guide to Vegetable Growing" was quickly snapped up after its launch



The eBook is now available at \$5/copy from the Plant Health Laboratories

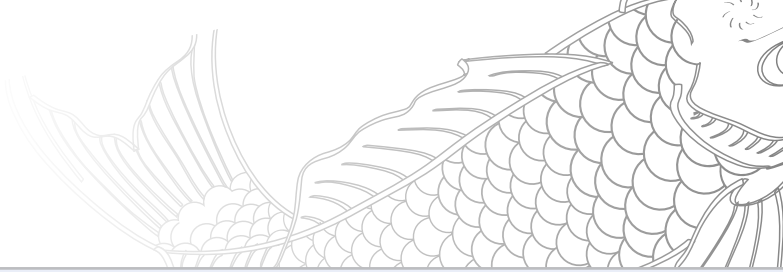
Plant Passport Service

Overseas visitors who purchased plants at the show were also pleased that they could apply for phytosanitary certificate to bring their plants home, at the plant health certification counter.

Thrilled by the awe-inspiring vegetable landscape and armed with their eBook reference, many left the show excited by the novelty of growing greens in the comfort of their urban homes while others eagerly await the next show for more vegetable varieties that they could cultivate.



Fishy Business



Farmed Cobia in Singapore Waters Reduces Reliance on Imports

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) is bringing yet another variety of farmed fish into the Singapore waters – cobia, a fast growing and delectable pelagic fish. Known also as the black kingfish, ling, or lemon fish, the cobia is among the six species of fish identified as suitable for local farming by AVA.

The first batch of cobia fingerlings was sent to the coastal fish farms for grow-out culture trials after the successful spawning of cobia by AVA in September 2007. This batch of cobia fingerlings reached marketable size and was ready for harvest from July 2008 onwards. An estimated eight tonnes of harvested cobia was made available at selected restaurants and supermarkets. The farming of cobia locally will reduce reliance on imports and enhance fish supply resilience.



Singaporeans can now enjoy locally farmed cobia at selected restaurants



Hauling in our first harvest of cobia

Cobia Sparked Interest in Investors and International Media

Apart from the positive feedback provided by local fish farmers during the culture trials, the media coverage from local newspapers and television regarding the successful harvesting of cobia in one of the fish farms have also sparked interest from local investors, regional farmers and international media such as the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) and the Discovery Channel concerning this fast growing, premium fish.

Nutritious Cobia Whipped into Many Different Dishes

The tender and firm texture of the cobia coupled with its mild flavour and rich fat content makes it an excellent fish for sashimi and sushi. The cobia can be grilled, steamed, fried, broiled and even used in soup dishes. With its high levels of Vitamin E, protein, fat, polyunsaturated fatty acids and DHA, cobia provides important nutrition for the brain and lowers blood cholesterol.

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