



MEDIA UPDATE ON VEGETABLE SUPPLY SITUATION IN SINGAPORE

1 The Pasir Panjang Wholesale Centre (PPWC) was closed on 19 April 2003 due to the discovery of SARS cases. Since then, the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) has been working closely with supermarkets, which import vegetables directly without going through PPWC, to increase their imports to meet anticipated shortfalls in supply.

2 AVA met up with 6 major supermarkets and one distributor this morning. Before the closure of PPWC, these supermarkets supplied about 20% of the vegetables consumed. They are confident that they are able to increase supply to the market to 50% to 60% of normal levels in the next few days. They will endeavour to increase this further.

3 AVA will also encourage and approve other supermarkets and importers who import directly from suppliers without going to PPWC to further increase the supply of fresh vegetables in Singapore.

4 Today, AVA has cleared 20 lorries bringing 20 tonnes of vegetables and 49 tonnes of fruits into Singapore (as at 6 pm). Since 8 am this morning, 18 lorries had been turned back. 13 lorries were turned back as they were not listed as direct suppliers and 5 were turned back because the workers had been to PPWC.

5 AVA would like to reiterate that vegetables available in the market are safe for consumption. Nevertheless, consumers should continue to observe good hygiene practices such as washing their vegetables thoroughly before cooking or serving.

**Issued by Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority
Ministry of National Development
on 21 Apr 2003**

\\c\pr03pp4web

MEDIA RELEASE