

WELCOME ADDRESS BY MS TAN POH HONG, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, AGRIFOOD AND VETERINARY AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE, AT AVA'S FOOD SAFETY AWARDS NIGHT ON 7 JULY 2017

Dr Koh Poh Koon

Senior Minister of State

Ministry of National Development and Ministry of Trade & Industry

Mr Lim Neo Chian

Chairman, Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. And a very warm welcome to AVA's Food Safety Awards Night.

The Changing Landscape

2. The food manufacturing scene in Singapore has evolved and grown substantially from the early days till today with many of you leveraging on technology and process innovation to improve efficiency and safety of your food products.

3. However, the increasingly complex global food supply chain presents a new set of challenges and uncertainties. At the same time, with free information flow and opinion exchange on social media, there is a greater demand from consumers for more transparency and information on the food that they are eating. The rapid rate of technological advancement and emergence of disruptive technologies add further pressure to both businesses and regulators.

4. On a global scale, rapid urbanisation and industrialisation have worsened climate change, which threatens farming and our food production sectors. This would have a direct impact on food supply and price volatility. Emerging foodborne and antimicrobial resistant pathogens also pose challenges to food safety.

Transformative approach for more efficient and effective regulatory oversight

5. While AVA already has in place a holistic and integrated food safety system to ensure that food, from farm to fork, is safe; moving forward, we will be taking a transformative approach to achieve more efficient and effective regulatory oversight. This process involves a multi-pronged strategy that encompasses harnessing science & technology, co-creation and partnerships with stakeholders (which include all of you here tonight), as well as regulatory innovations.

6. For more cost-effective and responsive regulatory outcomes, AVA intends to harness the power of smart technology and IoT (Internet of Things) to transform our business processes. As our first step to utilising smart technology, AVA has successfully completed an RFID Proof-of-Concept with some companies in the industry. We are in the midst of planning the implementation where this technology will enable retrieval of real-time information on-site, and upload AVA's inspection and licence information in a seamless manner. Going forward, we are considering the use of cameras, sensors and even drones, as alternatives to onsite inspection. We hope you will also embark on this journey with us where we use technology to improve the efficiency of our inspection.

7. While we acknowledge that the industry is already using technology to improve productivity and efficiency, we challenge the industry to also harness the power of technology to strengthen the food safety and traceability system. Emerging technologies such as blockchain which is built on bit-coin encryption system has the potential to strengthen traceability within the food supply chain from start to end. We have also been engaging the industry to pilot new technologies, such as the recent engagement to trial a cloud-based traceability system to improve cold chain management.

8. As the industry develops and food technology advances, innovative food products, modern production layout, design and materials will be introduced into food production. AVA will similarly innovate to ensure food safety amidst these developments, maintaining necessary oversight of food safety and yet allowing flexibility for businesses to grow. Ultimately, leading to greater ownership and responsibilities of all parties in ensuring food safety. During AVA's recent trial with the

industry as part of our inspection regime transformation, we are encouraged by industry's level of responsiveness to address their own non-conformances with AVA's new inspection approach. It is heartening to know that the industry takes pride in managing their own food safety system. This promotes a closer working relationship between the regulators, industry as well as the consumers.

How Industry Can Play Your Part

9. Even as AVA is prepared to co-create solutions with our stakeholders, the food industry must also play your part. Industry must be sensitive to your customers' rapidly changing needs and demands, and tailor solutions accordingly.

10. AVA is seeing an increasing number of new players in the market, who are highly driven and resourceful. They are bold to bring in new technologies and committed to food safety. An example is Tan Seng Kee Foods Pte Ltd, the makers of Kang Kang noodles. The company has adopted a pasteurisation technology for their manufactured noodles, increasing the shelf life of the products and even allowing them to be stored at ambient temperatures. We believe some of these technologies and expertise can benefit the industry as a whole. As such, we encourage the industry to help one another level up, be it in the sharing of best practices or even in coming together to conquer overseas markets together. Together, we are more!

Everyone Plays a Part in Food Safety

11. Finally, we must not forget the consumers, who need to be aware of the importance of food safety when it comes to buying, handling and preparing food. We all have a part to play in educating the public, either through the proper labelling of products, or through direct consumer education. This is especially important nowadays, where consumers are increasingly relying on online purchases and food delivery services.

12. In conclusion, with the pace of changes in our environment taking place faster than ever before, we need to constantly innovate to stay competitive. The only constant is that food safety continues to be a shared responsibility, where the regulators, industry and public must all work together to safeguard. To this, I thank our

Food Safety Partners for collaborating with AVA in educating consumers on food safety. On this note, I would also like to congratulate all the award recipients once again for your efforts in upholding high standards of food safety and I wish everyone an enjoyable evening.

13. Thank you.