

Star ESG

ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIAL GOVERNANCE



Rising Concerns over Food Security

Escalating food prices and a food import bill that is exacerbated by the weak ringgit have become a growing concern. Food security is now among the top priorities. While we ensure the affordability of food items, we must quickly improve on efficiencies in the agricultural sector.

Cover story on page 2 to 3

4

Adopting Common, Differentiated Responsibilities

Hibiscus Petroleum places key priority on governance to deliver on all aspects of its environmental, social and corporate responsibilities.

4

Clear and Bold Targets Imperative for Sustainability Efforts

Greater integration and renewed focus of business operation with TM's commitment to ESG.

9

Building Community Resilience through Food Security

Aiming to make a positive impact, Heineken Malaysia moves to empower communities in need to start and maintain a sustainable food supply.

10

Focusing on a People-Centric Approach

The ESG Positive Impact Awards 2022 focuses on the social aspect to promote a just and equitable progress for all.

By YAP LENG KUEN

WITH an abundance of land, resources and government policies, Malaysia remains food insecure. Five years ago, Malaysia ranked 40th on the Global Security Food Index (GSFI), with a heavy reliance on imports for essential food products.

Fast forward five years following the Covid-19 pandemic, Malaysia is now at 41st position on the GSFI. The fact is, Malaysia does not produce enough food for its population and industries; its agricultural productivity is 45% of the average among high income countries.

The agriculture sector faces structural issues related to uncertainty over farm ownership and leasing, labour shortages leading to an increase in idle agricultural land, low productivity and quality of agricultural produce, low level of automation and technology adoption, as well as high dependence on foreign labour.

Recovering from the pandemic, producers of selected agricultural commodities have increased production to meet local demand, said Ernst and Young Consulting Sdn Bhd partner Mohamed Husin.

Malaysia recorded 26 food items with more than 100% self-sufficiency ratio (SSR) in 2021, compared to 19 in 2020, according to the Department of Statistics Malaysia.

Progress in ensuring food security

The primary growth sector of Malaysian agriculture has been on cash crop exports, with increases in food crop production being a distant second priority.

Given recent trade disruptions due to Covid-19 restrictions, supply chain disruptions and outright military conflicts, this order of prioritisation should be examined, said Jeffrey Sachs Centre on Sustainable Development head Dr Chen Jit Ern.

Between 2000 and 2016, Malaysian rice productivity increased annually by 1.6% although paddy acreage only grew by 0.03% in the same period, according to research by Dr Sarena Che Omar, Khazanah Research Institute, in 2021.

This progress in production, however, did not lead to a comparable rise in food security, as consumption rose by 1.7% annually, more than wiping out all gains in productivity.

While the Malaysian Government is doing well to ensure the affordability of food products through price controls and various subsidies, the country is particularly lacking in agricultural research and development (R&D), as well as climate change adaptation.

Although Malaysia has a higher percentage of arable land, it has lower average yield compared to South Korea, Indonesia and the Philippines, according to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation.

Unexpected rainfall and floods have destroyed farms and crops across the country, causing damages exceeding RM68mil in the agriculture industry.

Stronger commitment and impactful investments are required to improve the productivity and resilience of the agricultural sector, said Mohamed.

Between 2017 to 2021, Malaysian households spent RM33.7bil annually on imports of food and beverages.

In 202, imports of food and beverages for consumption and industry had exceeded RM38.5bil and RM31bil respectively.

In 2020, eight items recorded an imports dependency ratio exceed-

Rising concerns over food security

While ensuring the affordability of food is important, Malaysia must also rapidly improve agricultural efficiency for long-term sustainability

ing 50%: cuttlefish (52.2%), fresh milk (53.5%), round cabbage (63.6%), chillies (72.4%), beef (78.1%), ginger (81.5%), mangoes (86.2%) and mutton (90.4%).

Malaysia needs to rethink the development of the agriculture sector to mitigate the impact of ever-rising food prices and cut down on increasing food import bills, said Socio Economic Research



Malaysia needs to rethink the development of the agriculture sector to mitigate negative impacts.

— Lee Heng Guie



Between 2000 and 2016, Malaysian rice productivity increased annually by 1.6%, but paddy acreage only grew by 0.03% in the same period.

— Dr Sarena Che Omar

Centre executive director Lee Heng Guie.

Agricultural sector needs reset

Planters and agropreneurs should have equal access to the resources and opportunities they need to be more productive.

Government and state intervention is required in lengthening the period for the temporary occupation lease (TOL) from one year to a minimum of 30 years for reasonable investment returns.

The uncertainty over renewal has constrained farmers' ability to obtain bank loans, hire workers and implement innovative programs, said Lee.

Mixed cropping systems should be encouraged to improve sustainability and efficiency of crop production with incentives for identified crops and sustainable farming practices.

The present subsidy regime for farm inputs, such as seeds and fertilisers should be expanded into one payment for sustainable agricultural practices that include the improvement of soil health, rainwater harvesting and inter-cropping.

Youths can be attracted through assistance measures and programmes, working capital grants and finance schemes.

New technologies that include artificial intelligence, big data analysis, automation, as well as the usage of drones and robotics should be deployed for sustainable, modern farming practices, supply



In the shift away from oil palm plantation towards food crops like corn, the focus should also be on upland rice, as opposed to paddy rice, which is grown in flooded fields.

Ensuring food security and expanding food production, reducing imports and food wastage amidst rising inflation and supply disruptions, should be among top the priorities for the incoming government.

chain management or grassroots agriculture innovation to increase crop productivity.

Fair labour, traceability and environmental responsibility are also important sustainability practices.

The proposed food subsidy card for B40 members require further enhancements such as improvement of databases to include undocumented residents, to ensure that food products are affordable and accessible to all.

In terms of climate change, the paddy fields are Malaysia's weakest point from as sea levels rise.

A check into the lowest lying regions and major rice production indicates that most of Malaysia's paddy production will be impacted even with a one-meter rise in sea level.

The Government should consider putting in resources to fight sea and underground saltwater intrusions and defend the paddy fields, or move the farmers uphill, said Dr Chen.

In the shift away from oil palm plantation towards food crops like corn, the focus should also be on upland rice, as opposed to paddy rice, which is grown in flooded fields.

Short-term measures such as price controls, export bans and subsidies for producers should be carefully implemented; they may negatively impact the market if poorly executed.

The Government's export ban and price ceiling on poultry products, along with rising costs of chicken feed, had resulted in oversupply and producers had to sell their stock at a loss.

Consumer behaviour may also be changed to promote alternative and locally sourced food products.

A shift from beef and mutton consumption towards poultry, in which Malaysia is self-sufficient, or even to a meat-less diet, would free up resources to directly feed humans rather than livestock.

To drive down the cost of production, alternative animal feed such as palm kernel cake, instead of imported corn and soybeans, should be identified and expanded into an industry.

As a nation with significant domestic natural gas supplies, Malaysia is capable of producing a substantial portion, or even become self-sufficient, in nitrogen-based fertilisers.

Steps taken by other countries

Food security has become an issue of national security in Switzerland, where agriculture is as important as military supplies, banking and insurance.

Through drip irrigation and modern farming technologies, Israel improved the productivity of its agriculture sector, achieving 90% in food SSR.

In 2017, Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries received JPY98.4bil (RM3bil) for agricultural R&D, which had significantly supported agricultural innovation.

Malaysia is lagging in comparison to food security measures



In the shift away from oil palm plantation towards food crops like corn, the focus should also be on upland rice, as opposed to paddy rice, which is grown in flooded fields.



Malaysia does not produce enough food for its population and industries; its agricultural productivity is 45% of the average among high income countries.

undertaken by leading countries, said Mohamed.

However, the country is well-positioned to adopt best practices via strategies set forth in key policy documents, such as the 12th Malaysia Plan and the National Food Security Policy Action Plan (NFSPAP) 2021-2025.

Food security action plan

The NFSPAP, which has identified five strategic thrusts, is a step in the right direction, but there must be political commitment and robust execution.

Initiatives outlined will transform the agriculture sector in Malaysia in a holistic manner through enhancing infrastructure, empowering local food producers and fostering collaboration between the various entities within the ecosystem.

Adopting fourth industrial revolution technologies, increasing spending on food R&D and using big data will enable data-driven decision-making, which will lead to improved yield, climate-resilient crops and sustainable agricultural practices.

The work on climate change and adaptation for fruits and selected crops is critical, as climate change will force us to rely on adapted crops, not ones that are controlled by foreign agritech intellectual properties and supply chains.

In the climate-changed future, the concern is that new crops that can survive might only come from overseas; Malaysia needs its own strains and systems, said Dr Chen.

There should not be too much investment into equipment for

wild fishing, as wild fish stocks are predicted to be depleted due to over-fishing and climate change; investments in aquaculture may be better.

To the extent that rural areas are not well-served by the main food distribution networks, there may be an increase in organised boat services in Sabah and Sarawak.

Preventing food wastage

Stressing on food production is not enough; the problem of food wastage must also be addressed.

The Government can guide the development of a secondary market for near-expiry food which, if not consumed, is soon discarded. In more developed economies, there is a defined market for such food, which feature sharply marked-down prices.

Supermarkets can collaborate on such efforts and this may actually help lower income people or those who do not attach a stigma to consume such food.

Up to 17,000 tonnes of food waste is recorded in Malaysia on daily basis; about 24% or 4,005 tonnes are still edible, according to landfill operator SWCorp Malaysia.

Ensuring food security and expanding food production, reducing imports and food wastage amidst rising inflation and supply disruptions, should be among top the priorities for the incoming Government.

We should also look beyond the short and medium term towards the long-term horizon of sustainability, inclusion and shared prosperity.



The Government should consider putting in resources to fight sea and underground saltwater intrusions and defend the paddy fields, or move the farmers uphill.

— Dr Chen Jit Ern



Recovering from the pandemic, producers of selected agricultural commodities have increased production to meet local demand. Stronger commitment and impactful investments are required to improve the productivity and resilience of the agricultural sector.

— Mohamed Husin



To drive down the cost of production, alternative animal feed such as palm kernel cake, instead of imported corn and soybeans, should be identified and expanded into an industry.

Market gardening sees growth

BETWEEN 2011 to 2021, growth in market gardening more than doubled that of Malaysia's population, which increased by 12.2%.

In fact, market gardening was the only crop activity where hectarage not only rose, but had outstripped population growth.

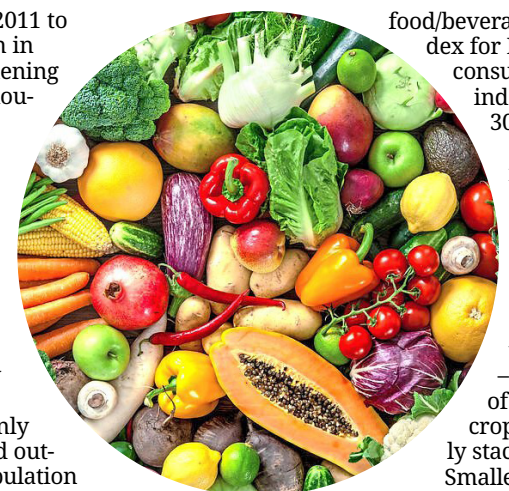
Between 2011 and 2021, land for market gardening grew 25.2%, while food/edible crop hectarage in Malaysia fell across the board.

Hectarage for cocoa fell 71%, sugarcane (-59%), tea (-10%), coffee (56%), fruits and pineapple (-12% each) and paddy (-6%).

Land under aquaculture was reduced by 32% for the entire 2021, amidst the Covid-19 lockdowns.

There are lessons to be learned as to why land planted with vegetables expanded, even as crop plantings fell for other types of food, said former Inter-Pacific Securities head of research Pong Teng Siew.

The progressive rise in prices of vegetables had enabled profitable and economic use of land. Between the same period, the



Enhanced farming intensity may be afforded by newer approaches such as vertical farming — the practice of growing crops in vertically stacked layers. Smaller private land plots in a rural, or near enough urban setting, are better suited for cultivation on an intensive scale. They fit the profile of the less organised

Ensuring food security and expanding food production, reducing imports and food wastage amidst rising inflation and supply disruptions, should be among top the priorities for the incoming government.

and fragmented nature of much of table food production such as rice and market gardening.

At owner-operated farms, the earnings potential is directly related to inputs by operators themselves, thus acting as an incentive for intensive farming.

Smaller, more intensively farmed land plots is possibly an answer; we should explore ways to make that available.

In view of its growth potential and health benefits, market gardening should be encouraged with support from the Government in terms of, among other things, incentives, finance, technological know-how and land availability.

Adopting common, differentiated responsibilities

Hibiscus prioritises governance to deliver on ESG considerations

By CALYN YAP
calyn@thestar.com.my

ESG is a journey and not a destination, which is why Hibiscus Petroleum Bhd (Hibiscus) will continuously strive to find new, better ways to improve and progress.

According to its co-founder and managing director Dr Kenneth Gerard Pereira, Hibiscus has long infused high standards of health, safety and environmental management into its corporate DNA, in addition to prioritising corporate governance and social responsibility – even before environmental, social and governance (ESG) became part of the corporate lexicon.

Hibiscus reprioritises ESG as GSE, he said, adding that when it comes to its direction on ESG practices, the priority thus lies in continuously raising the bar in its governance standards, while remaining agile as an organisation.

“A well-governed organisation will deliver on all aspects of its corporate and social responsibilities, including its obligation to contribute to a healthy planet,” he said.

This reflects Hibiscus’ commitment to understanding and implementing sustainable practices to achieve the right balance between the objectives of its shareholders; attaining economic success; as well as fulfilling its ethical obligations to other stakeholders and the wider community in which it has a presence.

Noting that the company’s most valuable asset is its people, Dr Kenneth pointed out that Hibiscus sets policies and communicates its standard expectations for conduct, while also continually reviewing and improving its governance structures and processes.

He added, “Such efforts are undertaken to continually instil a strong culture of governance to ensure that we are doing and are seen to be doing the right thing.”

This has enabled Hibiscus to be accorded a Green Lane Policy status since 2019 by Bursa Malaysia, in recognition of good corporate governance and disclosure practices.

Such ethos has also seen the company maintaining its constituency on the FTSE4Good Bursa Malaysia Index since late 2020 and the FTSE4Good Bursa Malaysia Shariah Index. It has also retained the 4-stars rating from FTSE Russell, which has repeatedly placed it in the top 25% by ESG ratings amongst public listed companies in the FBM EMAS Index.

In 2021, Hibiscus announced its aspiration to be a net zero emissions producer by 2050 and published its roadmap to achieve this aim in its corporate mission statement, energy transition strategy and climate change framework.

An initiative towards the net zero objective, the energy transition strategy is underpinned by three key pillars, namely the creation of a resilient portfolio of hydrocarbon assets; efforts to decarbonise upstream operations to optimise operational energy efficiency and the material reduction of oil and reliance on diesel fuels for offshore installations with its switch to hybrid power sources of solar photovoltaics and wind turbines; as well as exploring green investment opportunities through progressive and disciplined steps to preserve shareholder value.

He shared, “We acted on our stated plans through the successful acquisition in January 2022 of Repsol Exploración SA’s producing assets in Malaysia, Vietnam and the Malaysia-Vietnam Commercial Arrangement Area, thus increasing our natural gas portfolio by almost 30% and thereby fortifying Hibiscus’ energy transition efforts.



The use of oil and gas will only be significantly addressed when there is no demand, said Dr Kenneth.

“It should be noted that gas is seen as the cleanest form of fossil fuels and has been included by the European Union as part of their green taxonomy.”

In tandem, it has aligned its sustainability policy to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), while key principles in the UNSDGs match commitments in its environment policy.

Further, Hibiscus follows the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, as prescribed within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

ESG practices have become a critical part of any dialogue, whether it involves the industry, the investment community and financial institutions or even the community, particularly the younger generation.

He opined, “Being in the fossil fuels business, our emissions immediately attract attention and those who are not willing to do a deep dive into details, generally view our activities negatively. We are conscious of the importance of the health of our planet, but we are also cognisant of the wellbeing of our community and humankind in general.”

The balance, Dr Kenneth stressed, lies in adopting common, differentiated responsibilities during the energy transition period.

“We all share a common goal, but we should be given different timelines to achieve this goal. It works like a handicap system in a golf game that includes professionals and amateurs. Each golfer finishes 18 holes with a different number of strokes but their personal handicap, which is based on their personal ability, normalises the scores.

“Similarly, the developed economies are the professionals in this golf game, so they carry low handicaps. The emerging economies are amateurs and are thus accorded high handicaps. Simply said, we can all participate in a rewarding round of golf, or contribute to a cleaner planet, if we declare our handicaps honestly and play the game fairly,” he said.

Through this initiative with Star Media Group, Hibiscus is taking the opportunity to communicate the message that the use of oil and gas will not be materially impacted by attacking supply alone. It will only be significantly addressed when there is no demand, he opined.

He concluded, “Demand is driven by human behaviour and unless each and every one makes a conscious sacrifice to reduce our personal carbon footprint, oil and gas demand will be fulfilled.

“Remember, we do not eliminate fishermen in order to stop people consuming shark’s fin soup to protect the sharks from cruelty. Instead, we ask people to stop consuming the soup!”

Clear and bold targets imperative for sustainability efforts

TM’s ESG commitment shows greater integration, renewed focus of business operations

By CALYN YAP
calyn@thestar.com.my

INCORPORATING sustainability into the business strategy can build business resilience, create inclusive value for stakeholders and contribute to solving global sustainability challenges.

For Telekom Malaysia Bhd (TM), it enables the mega telecommunications infrastructure player to meet its nation-building agenda, in addition to being a responsible corporate organisation.

TM chief risk officer Mohamad Mohamad Zain shared the telco provider’s pride in embedding environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles into its purpose, strategic decisions and ecosystem for effective implementation.

“In doing so, we are better equipped to mitigate and respond to ESG risks and opportunities, such as the effects arising from pandemics or climate change that may impact our future performance – ultimately safeguarding the business,” he shared.

The focus is on value creation or enhancement, in line with clear and bold commitments and targets to track its near to long-term sustainability performance, including:

> Protecting and preserving the planet via greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reduction.

Offsetting energy consumption requires long-term efforts. TM seeks to progressively cut down its GHG emissions by 30% in 2024, 45% by 2030 and achieve net-zero emission by 2050. It will fully adopt the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures framework by 2023.

He explained, “Our key focus includes improvements involving Scope 1 and 2, namely energy efficiency, usage, as well as fleet management, including embarking on renewable energy and carbon offset via tree planting.

“We want to ensure that we focus on improving our internal process before we further move into improving our Scope 3 emissions.”

TM is also actioning a slew of concurrent initiatives to complement its efforts to support preservation of the environment.

Today, its utility vehicles operate with lighter loads to reduce fuel consumption and further exploring to introduce a fleet of heavy-duty utility electric vehicles (EVs), which is subject to the availability of charging stations to support the EVs in the future.

> Enriching social prosperity and livelihood through digital inclusion.

TM is set to provide access to high-speed internet to at least 70% of premises nationwide. It promotes gender diversity in decision-making roles by having a minimum of 30% women on its board of directors and in management role. Further, it will ensure that 100% of its mega suppliers complies with ESG principles by 2024 and a target of 50% mid-tier supplier compliance by 2030.

“For the social aspect, we continue to enhance our social obligations towards our customers, suppliers and employees, while at the same time continuing to embrace the importance of equality across the group,” he shared.

> Ensuring responsible conduct with the highest standards of ethics, integrity, and transparency.

Under governance, TM will continue



“TM will continue to play a substantial part in leaving a lasting legacy behind for future generations, said Mohamad.

working with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission to uphold its zero-tolerance of corruption and maintain the highest standards of corporate governance through improving various policies and guidelines.

TM in 2021 embarked on a three-year transformation journey in line with the New TM Compass, involving the four elements of its purpose, business, customers and people.

To further enhance its implementation strategy, TM set up the Sustainability Action Working Group, a collaborative platform to drive concerns during sustainability-related discussions and execution holistically across TM Group.

There is also TM’s enterprise risk management and business continuity management frameworks, in addition to the 2022 introduction of ESG key performance indicators across the board and senior management levels, as well as its participation in the Corporate Sustainability Assessment for the Dow Jones Sustainability Index.

When it comes to the ESG Positive Impact Awards 2022, TM believes that it will help attract more local and international investors, as well as reflect the group’s alignment with other global standards in putting its efforts towards creating a better place for future generations.

Similarly, Mohamad pointed out that telecommunications and technology can play a role in addressing emerging challenges, as well as drive improvements ranging from healthcare access to pollution monitoring and smart agriculture to financial inclusion, among others.

As part of the vital foundation blocks that anchor the digital economy, telecommunications and technology can promote economic and social inclusivity – to say nothing of its other commercial, social and economic contributions via digital participation and proactive, data-driven decision-making, as the world moves towards a more sustainable future.

“Regardless of what lies ahead, we are confident in the group’s ability to endure and carry on.

“As the past 75 years have demonstrated, Warga TM are resilient to any challenges that may come our way.

“We will continue to play a substantial part in leaving a lasting legacy behind for future generations, staying true to our commitment in transforming the lives of all Malaysians,” he said.

Enabling sustainability across communities

With 90 years of giving to our communities, OCBC Bank is enabling individuals, SMEs and businesses to build a more sustainable future. Here's how it can involve you.



Individuals

We provide individuals – that's you – with the option of sustainability-driven financing products and services that work for your lifestyle. Tap into our solar panel financing options and ESG-integrated investment offerings (including unit trusts and bonds) today. Find out more at www.ocbc.com.my/esg



SMEs

We offer SMEs sustainable finance options through green loan proceeds for financing or re-financing (in whole or in part), new or existing projects under development, construction and operations. Our goal is to help you shift to greener business approaches and develop sustainably. To find out more, call us at 1300 88 7000.



Enterprises & Corporates

We offer enterprises and corporates sustainability-linked loans with interest rate adjustments that are pegged to a series of sustainable goals. We do this by incorporating your commitment to decarbonisation into a sustainability performance target that attracts lower interest rates. To find out more, call us at 1300 88 7000.



Find out about our commitment to sustainability at www.ocbc.com.my/group/sustainability

OCBC Bank (Malaysia) Berhad (199401009721 / 295400-W)



ECOWORLD
CREATING TOMORROW & BEYOND



One beneficiary who received baked goods from Rainbows Health Food was The Assembly Soup Kitchen for flood relief efforts through TLFP.

Helping communities in knead

Reducing food waste, one loaf at a time

By **CHOW ZHI EN**
zhien.chow@thestar.com.my

EXPERTS are projecting that there will be 14 million metric tons of material solid waste, which includes food waste, by 2022 – enough to fill our iconic Petronas Twin Towers entirely every week.

Surely food waste isn't that bad for the environment? After all, it's all "biodegradable".

The truth of the matter is that food waste that ends up in landfills contributes to carbon dioxide and methane emissions. According to Malaysian Nature Society president Prof Dr Ahmad Ismail, about 7% of greenhouse gases produced globally was due to preventable food waste.

Logically then, the best course of action is to make sure that we're as efficient as possible in food production and consumption. After all, there's no food waste if everything gets eaten in time.

Labour of "loaf"

Since 2015, Rainbows Health Food has been known for their sprouted breads – a type of bread that is created by allowing whole grains to sprout, or germinate, before milling them into flour.

The homegrown bakery operates in Kota Damansara, Petaling Jaya, but will be moving its operations to Eco Business Park V in Puncak Alam by next year.

Prolonging a food's shelf life is important in reducing food waste – whether it's through artificial preservatives or canning, freezing, pasteurisation or even sprouting. Foods like Rainbows Sprouted Bread

come "baked-in" with its own natural preservative through the germination process, which gives the bread its sourdough-like tang, while allowing it to last a week on its own with proper storage.

Noting the rising costs of raw materials too, Rainbows Health Food co-founder John Tan, who is also sales and marketing director, said: "To reduce waste, we forecast supply and demand as accurately as we can to ensure there's no glaring overproduction. "The cost of raw materials has gone up with all the current supply chain disruptions, so as a business, it makes sense for us to work towards reducing food waste.

"Since our sprouted breads take a lot of time and effort to make, we try and salvage what we can for human consumption. If a batch doesn't come out per our standards, we donate those edible loaves to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that distribute them to vulnerable communities."

'Sharing is caring'

Here's where The Lost Food Project (TLFP) and other NGOs come in to assist with Rainbows Health Food's goal to reduce food waste. Working with their main partner, TLFP, Tan donates surplus unexpired loaves to the communities they serve.

"We try to give out as many loaves as possible by working with our partners, so that they can arrange for the dispatch and distribution to the communities they serve since we lack the human resources to reach everyone in need," he added.

Tan is no stranger to food donations as he has personally donated to multiple NGOs, orphanages and old folks homes around the Klang Valley.

"We started collaborating around two years ago before the movement control orders. They have a team of volunteers that come to our factory almost every day – rain or shine – to collect our surplus bread.

"In the last four months this year, TLFP collected about 2,000kg of our bread, which was converted into over 5,000 meals. This also helped to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions (since the food doesn't reach our landfills) by 4,800kg," he said.

For Malaysians trying to reduce their own food waste at home, Tan believes that sharing is key.

"If you have extra food that you know you'll not be able to finish, why not share with your friends or neighbours?"

"If you have a surplus, you can also visit local food banks to give your extra food items, instead of letting them expire and throwing them away."



Rainbows Health Food staff and friendly neighbourhood Spiderman on behalf of fundraising platform GoCare Donation Crowd Funding, an initiative by MCA's Crisis Relief Squad, to collect surplus bread.

Waste not, want not

Thousands of tonnes of food are wasted every day in Malaysian households. Here's how to avoid this vicious cycle

By **ABIRAMI DURAI**
abirami@thestar.com.my

EVERY day, Malaysians produce 17,000 tonnes of food waste, out of which nearly 25% is edible. This amount could easily feed nearly 2.9 million Malaysians three meals a day.

The remaining food waste likely ends up rotting or spoiling as a result of carelessness or negligence, which many of us are guilty of.

The issue of food waste is a weighty one that has become deeply entrenched in modern society – both in developing and developed nations. Easy availability of food has perpetuated a culture of wanton wastage. Truthfully, if nothing is done to curb this, future generations will simply hit 'copy paste' and mimic the behaviour of the current generation.

Most food waste is also tied to food safety. Ensuring that the handling, preparation and storage of food is dealt with properly can make a huge dent towards ensuring that no food goes to waste.

This is particularly pertinent as wasted food often ends up in landfills, which ultimately contributes to higher greenhouse gas emissions.

The sad reality is many Malaysians have lost the wisdom of generations of yore who did not waste because they had the know-how and pragmatism to utilise techniques to keep, preserve or enhance the life span of ingredients.

But there is no time like the present to learn new things, so here are some handy tips to get you started on your no-food waste journey!

Understanding best before labels and expiry dates

In the United States, data from 2015 showed that an estimated 80% of Americans prematurely discarded food due to confusion about food labels i.e. best before, expiry dates and sell by dates.

All these labels can be extremely befuddling for the average consumer and for people wary about food safety, this often means a product is binned – regardless of the fact that it is still edible.

So what do these labels actually mean? Best before dates are primarily for canned foods with longer shelf lives. These foods go through thermal processing, meaning they are processed at temperatures ranging from 121°C (for food like canned fruit cocktails) and 170°C (for canned meats). This effectively destroys most of the bacteria, including dangerous spores, which is why average shelf life is 18 months.

Best before dates indicates how long the product may be stored prior to consumption. If it says best before April 2023, then before the date, the colour, nutrients, texture and flavours are there. After the date, the colour might be slightly altered – it's still safe to consume but it isn't as appealing when you look at it. Generally, canned foods can last two to three years. So check before you throw out that canned food as it might still be edible even though it is past its 'best before' date.

Expiry dates on the other hand, relate to perishable foods like milk and yoghurt. It is important to note that food producers often take extra precautions when displaying these dates. So milk for example, might actually have a shelf life of 21 days but the food producer might indicate that it expires in 14 days – just to be on the safe side.

In this case, using intuition and sense for certain fresh produce – like milk or bread – might be a handy tool to determining if something is still usable. After all, when yoghurt has curdled, you can tell. When milk is sour, you know.

In the case of meat however – if has not been frozen upon purchase – it is best to follow expiry dates to the letter.

To add to consumers' confusion, some products also display sell-by dates, which many people mistake for an expiry date. In reality, sell-by dates are there for retailers to do stock rotation, as products have to be sold by a particular date, failing which, they are collected back and often end up being discarded or used as animal feed.

Ultimately, knowing what these labels mean can go a long way towards understanding what should be discarded and what can safely be used.

product may be stored prior to consumption. If it says best before April 2023, then before the date, the colour, nutrients, texture and flavours are there. After the date, the colour might be slightly altered – it's still safe to consume but it isn't as appealing when you look at it. Generally, canned foods can last two to three years. So check before you throw out that canned food as it might still be edible even though it is past its 'best before' date.

Expiry dates on the other hand, relate to perishable foods like milk and yoghurt. It is important to note that food producers often take extra precautions when displaying these dates. So milk for example, might actually have a shelf life of 21 days but the food producer might indicate that it expires in 14 days – just to be on the safe side.

In this case, using intuition and sense for certain fresh produce – like milk or bread – might be a handy tool to determining if something is still usable. After all, when yoghurt has curdled, you can tell. When milk is sour, you know.

In the case of meat however – if has not been frozen upon purchase – it is best to follow expiry dates to the letter.

To add to consumers' confusion, some products also display sell-by dates, which many people mistake for an expiry date. In reality, sell-by dates are there for retailers to do stock rotation, as products have to be sold by a particular date, failing which, they are collected back and often end up being discarded or used as animal feed.

Ultimately, knowing what these labels mean can go a long way towards understanding what should be discarded and what can safely be used.

Avoiding food spoilage

Perhaps one of the biggest causes of food waste is mishandling or mismanagement of food itself. In the United States for example, about two-thirds of food is thrown away because it is not used before it goes bad. A lot of this stems from a lack of knowledge about proper ways of handling food. Once this knowledge is applied, in many instances, food will last longer, thus potentially avoiding wastage.

To begin with, upon purchasing meat and seafood, these items should be quickly divided into meal-sized portions and then immediately stored in the freezer (if not cooking immediately). Also monitor your freezer temperature to ensure that it is below -15°C. Fresh meat and seafood stored in a freezer can last up to a year and once defrosted,

should not be frozen and thawed again. Meat and seafood kept in a refrigerator (at least 5°C and below) should be cooked as quickly as possible to avoid wastage.

Most vegetables on the other hand – like carrots, broccoli, cabbage and celery should be kept in sealed containers or zip-lock bags (this will help keep it fresher for longer) in the crisper of a fridge. Mushrooms meanwhile are best stored in paper bags.

Also it is always best to separate fruits and vegetables. Some fruits like apples and bananas for instance, release ethylene gas, which accelerates the ripening and deterioration of certain vegetables like leafy greens, cabbage and broccoli. This can cause unnecessary wastage.

Aromatics like garlic and ginger should be kept at room temperature (without plastic packaging as this will expedite spoilage) so they last longer.

Semi-perishable foods like flour, pasta and rice can be frozen or refrigerated in a sealed container for up to six months. In Malaysia, weevils often attack rice and flour when kept at room temperature, so to avoid wastage, keep these items in your fridge and use when necessary.

Adjust food needs as required

Overpreparing, overbuying and poor planning can all be contributory factors when it comes to food waste. Before heading out to the grocery store, it is good to do a check to see what is in your pantry and fridge. Take everything out if necessary so you don't inadvertently end up buying something that you don't need.

Also double-confirm that all family members will be at home every day of the week



Choosing the freshest produce ultimately means it will last longer, thus giving consumers more time to utilise it. – Filepic



Vegetables that are wilting or looking a little worse for the wear can be roasted instead of thrown. – AMERICAN HERITAGE CHOCOLATE/Unsplash

should not be frozen and thawed again. Meat and seafood kept in a refrigerator (at least 5°C and below) should be cooked as quickly as possible to avoid wastage.

Most vegetables on the other hand – like carrots, broccoli, cabbage and celery should be kept in sealed containers or zip-lock bags (this will help keep it fresher for longer) in the crisper of a fridge. Mushrooms meanwhile are best stored in paper bags.

Also it is always best to separate fruits and vegetables. Some fruits like apples and bananas for instance, release ethylene gas, which accelerates the ripening and deterioration of certain vegetables like leafy greens, cabbage and broccoli. This can cause unnecessary wastage.

Aromatics like garlic and ginger should be kept at room temperature (without plastic packaging as this will expedite spoilage) so they last longer.

Semi-perishable foods like flour, pasta and rice can be frozen or refrigerated in a sealed container for up to six months. In Malaysia, weevils often attack rice and flour when kept at room temperature, so to avoid wastage, keep these items in your fridge and use when necessary.

Adjust food needs as required

Overpreparing, overbuying and poor planning can all be contributory factors when it comes to food waste. Before heading out to the grocery store, it is good to do a check to see what is in your pantry and fridge. Take everything out if necessary so you don't inadvertently end up buying something that you don't need.

Also double-confirm that all family members will be at home every day of the week

that you intend to cook. That way, you will only need to buy what you need for the amount of people you intend to feed.

When shopping, think about purchasing unripe fruit (so it lasts longer) and only opt for the freshest looking produce (also so it lasts longer). When cooking, remember to cook food in the order of how well it is likely to last. This means meals made up of leafy greens that are likely to wilt fast should be made first while harder vegetables like carrots or cabbages can be cooked on the last day of the week. Also adapt and use what you don't have. If a recipe calls for a vegetable that you don't have, just use what you have instead and invent your own recipe!

And eat those leftovers or repurpose them. Leftovers have been the foundation of some great Asian-style meals. Like Sri Lankan kuliya rice, which sees all the leftover dishes from the day before combined with leftover rice to form a whole new meal. Some leftover meat and vegetable dishes can also often be used to make fried rice.

Think outside the box or if you can't be bothered – don't think at all, just eat leftover meals as they are and think of these meals as saving you the bother of cooking for the day.

Preservation techniques and repurposing ingredients

In the past, many Malaysians were adept at repurposing ingredients or extending the shelf life of fresh produce. Ikan bilis (dried anchovies) for instance arose as a means of preserving the shelf life of fish. These skills can be brought to the fore again, for those looking to ensure their food lasts longer.

While refrigeration remains the most common preservation method, there are plenty of other ways to ensure food lasts longer, like pickling with vinegar or oil, curing with salt, drying and fermenting.

Vegetables for example can be pickled in vinegar and turned into achar while meats can be brined in salt. The Internet is packed with recipe ideas so if you have an overabundance of a certain ingredient, look online for recipes that will help keep it for longer.

It is also important to remember that even when a vegetable is past its prime, it can often still be utilised or repurposed in some other way. For example, herbs that are wilted can be used to make a vibrant pesto or an Indian-style mint pudina.

Vegetables that are looking a little worse for the wear can be roasted or turned into the base for hearty vegetable soups.

Ultimately, there are plenty of ways to use or make use of ingredients that would otherwise be destined for landfills. If you stay focused on that, you'll find all sorts of incredible ways to build new meals out of seemingly unusable produce.



It is important to store vegetables in the fridge in containers or zip-lock bags to extend shelf life and avoid quick deterioration. – ELLO/Unsplash



Before heading to the supermarket, consumers should make a list of what they need to purchase to avoid overbuying and ultimately wasting food. – Filepic



Vegetables that are past their prime are great for making vegetable soups or adding to other soups. – BLUEBIRD PROVISIONS/Unsplash



Meat stored in a freezer can last up to a year, but once defrosted, should never be frozen and thawed again. – VICTORIA SHES/Unsplash



It is best to use intuition and sense to see if fresh milk past the expiry date is still usable. – CHARLOTTE MAY/Pexels

Our collaboration with BYD is one of the steps we are taking towards our aim of becoming a leader in electric vehicles. This is also aligned with the government's push towards low-carbon mobility.

– Sime Darby Motors Malaysia managing director Andrew Basham



SEPT 29

> **Sime Darby Motors Malaysia** inked a distribution agreement with BYD, marking the entry of BYD's electric vehicles (EVs) into the Malaysian passenger car market, which will entail Sime Darby Motors distributing BYD's ATTO 3 and the new e6 models.

“Our collaboration with BYD is one of the steps Sime Darby Motors is taking towards our aim of becoming a leader in EV. This is also aligned with the government's push towards low-carbon mobility,” said managing director Andrew Basham in a statement.

> **S P Setia Bhd** commenced to install solar panels at its corporate office in Setia Alam, Shah Alam, following the memorandum of understanding signed with Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) in April this year.

In the first phase of its green initiative installation, GSPARX Sdn Bhd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of TNB was appointed to provide about 10 megawatt peak of solar rooftop for photovoltaic self-consumption of the developer's commercial buildings. This installation is expected to reduce up to 9,053 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.

S P Setia president and chief executive officer Datuk Choong Kai Wai said: “We hope that our collaboration will propel Malaysia toward its pledge of achieving carbon neutrality by the year 2050.”

> Electronics manufacturing services (EMS) provider **Betamek Bhd** is aiming to grow revenue by leveraging the need for increased usage of electronics as the green vehicle market continues to expand.

“Our future plans are to leverage on new technologies as the automotive industry moves towards hybrid and EVs,” said Betamek chief operating officer Megat Iskandar Hashim Ismail.

“We see this trend continuing for years to come. And as that happens, there is an increased need for more electronics in every vehicle,” he added.

> Malaysian companies still hold favourable ESG metrics among their Asean peers, says **Maybank Investment Banking Group (Maybank IBG)**.

Of the 475 companies covered by Sustainalytics in the Asean-six markets, only 177 companies or 37% satisfy the filters requirements such as the low and medium ESG risk score, no or minimal controversies and medium or strong management, said Maybank IBG in its latest sustainability research report.

Sustainalytics is a leading external ESG research and data provider that Maybank IBG has partnered with for ESG services.

SEPT 30

> Japan and **Petroleum Nasional Bhd (PETRONAS)** are considering future joint investments in gas exploration and production projects as well as developing cleaner ways to make liquefied natural gas (LNG).

The Japanese government and PETRONAS will sign a memorandum of cooperation in Tokyo at the LNG Producer-Consumer Conference hosted by Japan's trade ministry, according to documents obtained by *Bloomberg News*.

> **RHB Banking Group (RHB)** has announced the establishment of its board sustainability committee (BSC) to assist the board of directors in driving the group's sustainability and climate-related agenda and providing oversight for ESG matters.

Previously, the board of directors of the group had direct oversight of sustainability matters.

In a statement, the bank said with the launch of RHB's five-year (2022-2026) sustainability strategy and roadmap, a decision was made to set up the BSC to enable greater focus and in-depth discussions at the highest level on material sustainability and climate-related matters.

> **CIMB Group** says security has “always been the group's highest priority” and CIMB Bank Bhd and CIMB Islamic Bank Bhd are firmly on track to implement the enhanced security measures against scams highlighted by Bank Negara.

In a statement, group chief executive officer Datuk Abdul Rahman Ahmad said the bank already has “strong existing controls with multiple layers of security in place. At the same time, CIMB is committed to ensuring that the security measures are continually enhanced to protect customers,” he said.

OCT 4

> **EP Manufacturing Bhd's (EPMB)** wholly owned subsidiary, EP Blueshark Sdn Bhd, has been given the green light by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (Miti) to assemble and manufacture two-wheeled EVs in the country.

The automotive component manufacturer said the manufacturing licence from Miti will enable its subsidiary to import electric bike components in semi-knocked-down and completely-knocked-down form.

This allows the group to assemble and manufacture two-wheeled EVs at its upcoming manufacturing facility in

ESG in the news

Glenmarie, Shah Alam.

OCT 5

> Nescafe, **Nestle's** largest coffee brand, continues its efforts to further drive sustainability in coffee farming by launching Nescafe Plan 2030, where it is earmarked to invest over one billion Swiss francs (RM4.7bil) by 2030.

The investment, which builds on the existing Nescafe Plan launched in 2010, is to support coffee farmers to drive regenerative agriculture, which in turn helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as improve their livelihoods.

Under its Nescafe Plan 2030, the group aims to source 20% of its coffee through regenerative agricultural methods by 2025, while by 2050, the group aims to produce half of its coffee through the aforementioned method.

OCT 7

> **Citaglobal Bhd**, formerly known as WZ Satu Bhd, is aiming for more jobs from the telecommunications and renewable energy (RE) sectors following its acquisition of Citaglobal Engineering Services Sdn Bhd (CESSB).

This comes after 99.99% of the company's minority shareholders approved its proposed related-party transaction to acquire the entire stake in CESSB from Tiza Global Sdn Bhd for RM140mil through the issuance of 736.84 million new shares at an issue price of 19 sen each.

> **G Capital Bhd's** 70%-owned subsidiary Solarcity Malaysia Sdn Bhd has signed a 25-year solar power purchase agreement (PPA) with Aryzta Solutions Malaysia Sdn Bhd.

In a filing with Bursa Malaysia, G Capital said Solarcity would supply solar photovoltaic (PV) energy to Aryzta via a 1,100KWp solar PV system located at the latter's premises in Pulau Indah, Selangor.

OCT 12

> **Farm Fresh** intends to roll out regenerative agriculture practices across all its farms by 2024.

Its group managing director and group chief executive officer Loi Tuan Ee said: “These are practices that involve the recycling and reuse of liquid and solid waste generated by our herd for key functions across our farms.”

These are practices that involve the recycling and reuse of liquid and solid waste generated by our herd for key functions across our farms.”

– Farm Fresh group managing director and group chief executive officer Loi Tuan Ee



OCT 14

> Clean energy solutions provider **Gentari Sdn Bhd** and **Proton New Energy Technology Sdn Bhd (PRO-NET)** are working together to drive growth in Malaysia's EV infrastructure in line with national decarbonisation goals.

The two companies have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to leverage each other's capabilities, Gentari said in a statement.

Gentari is a subsidiary of Petroleum Nasional Bhd (PETRONAS), while PRO-NET is a subsidiary of Proton Holdings Bhd.

> **The Malaysian Investment Development Authority (Mida)** has approved 882 green technology (green tech) projects valued at RM3.66bil and seven green tech services worth RM21.9mil in 2021.

Environment and Water Minister Datuk Seri Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man said these projects comprised investments in the renewable energy generation, green building and waste management sub-sectors.

OCT 15

> **Tenaga Nasional Bhd's (TNB)** wholly-owned special-purpose vehicle TNB Bukit Selambau Solar Dua Sdn Bhd has secured financing of up to RM185mil for the Large Scale Solar Mentari (LSS4) – its third LSS project – in Kuala Muda, Kedah.

> Clean energy solution specialist **Samaiden Group Bhd's** wholly-owned subsidiary Samaiden Sdn Bhd has entered into an agreement with Thingnario Ltd.

The pact is to explore an opportunity in providing telemetry monitoring system support to the group's renewable energy and energy efficiency businesses in Malaysia.

OCT 17

> **Press Metal Aluminium Holdings Bhd** is seen to be a key proxy of the sustainable low-carbon producing aluminium smelters, says RHB Research.

This is amid the global decarbonisation efforts in limiting coal-based smelters and the current tight supply in the indus-

try, the research house said in a recent report to its clients.

> Leveraging on the strong momentum for its upcoming NCT Smart Industrial Park (NSIP) in Selangor, the **NCT Group** has signed two MoUs with **Huawei Technologies (M) Sdn Bhd** and **Green Quarters Sdn Bhd**.

Through the MoU, Huawei will provide information and communication technology infrastructure products and solutions, data centre solutions as well as solar energy storage solutions to support NSIP in becoming a fully connected smart development.

Meanwhile, NCT's MoU with Green Quarters is aimed at working hand in hand to achieve a sustainable industrial park in compliance with the local and international green-building certification to reduce industrial and commercial carbon footprint.

OCT 18

> **EP Manufacturing Bhd** has entered into a memorandum of agreement with California's Saean Group Inc to mass produce 20,000 electric cars a year for the South-East Asian market.

The group is making its debut in the manufacturing of EVs with the partnership to mutually develop and manufacture vehicles in the A-segment's four-seater and five-door electric cars.

The strategic alliance may also look into manufacturing heavy industry EVs for the construction sector.

> **Etiga** has launched the country's first insurance and takaful coverage for EV home chargers. The coverage is complementary to an Etiga private car policy or certificate for newly registered battery-powered EV or plug-in hybrid EVs.

Standalone coverage for EV home chargers is also available for EV owners who have purchased the EV home wall charger separately from their new motor insurance.

OCT 19

> **G Capital Bhd (GCAP)** via its wholly-owned subsidiary, CM Creative Itinerary Sdn Bhd has entered into a joint venture and shareholders' agreement with Innoprise Synergy Sdn Bhd and Kerap Hijau Sdn Bhd to jointly develop mini-hydropower projects in Sabah.

State-owned organisation Yayasan Sabah Group is the holding company of Innoprise. Kerap Hijau has received approval to assume the name of Sabah Renewable Energy Corp Sdn Bhd.

The parties have agreed to collectively pool their resources to raise funds of not less than RM3bil for developing the first 200MW mini-hydropower projects.

OCT 20

> **The Malaysian Aviation Commission (Mavcom)** has released a consultation paper on the proposed amendments to the Malaysian Aviation Consumer Protection Code.

In a statement, Mavcom said the proposed amendments include protection concerning refunds, passenger entitlement, travel passes and removal of cancelled flights from airlines' booking systems, among others.

OCT 22

> **Carlsberg Brewery Malaysia Bhd** has launched its Together Towards ZERO and Beyond (TTZAB), a new ESG programme with additional two priorities and revised targets.

The brewer's ESG programme's refined priorities include a roadmap to achieve net-zero carbon emissions across the entire value chain by 2040, all the way from the barley in the fields to the beer in hand.

“As we are celebrating the very first Carlsberg beer brewed locally 50 years ago, we are pleased to launch TTZAB and pledge our support towards Malaysia's net-zero emissions ambition by 2050 and the 12th Malaysia Plan: Advancing Sustainability by 2025.

“Our aim is to enable consumers to enjoy a great beer whilst leaving the smallest carbon footprint possible,” said Carlsberg Malaysia managing director Stefano Clini.

OCT 25

> **IOI Properties Group Bhd's (IOI Prop)** IOI City Mall has received the green building index (GBI) certification under non-residential existing building.

In a statement, the property developer said it would be prioritising the integration of green building design into its developments by implementing ESG initiatives across its business segments.

The group will also be adopting the low carbon cities framework.

“The GBI certification of IOI City Mall marks an exciting milestone in our sustainability journey for IOI Properties Group.

“It reflects the group's commitment to operate responsibly, minimising our impact on the environment, as we continue to enhance our value proposition while safeguarding the environment for future generations,” said IOI Prop chief executive officer Datuk Voon Tin Yow.

The GBI certification of IOI City Mall marks an exciting milestone in our sustainability journey for IOI Properties Group.

– IOI Prop chief executive officer Datuk Voon Tin Yow





Heineken Cares worked with the Make It Right Movement, a CSR initiative by Brickfields Asia College, last year.



Heineken Cares reached out to local communities by providing food aid from July to December period last year.



Dr Tang (right) with the PWD Smart Farmability satellite farm.

Building community resilience through food security

Heineken Cares to empower local communities to start and maintain a sustainable food supply via community farms

By CALYN YAP
calyn@thestar.com.my

AS people across the globe come together via concerted efforts to heal from the wounds caused by Covid-19, navigating a path to the post-pandemic future remains challenging for all segments of society – particularly for the B40 and underprivileged communities that suffered from loss of income during the multiple lockdowns, as well as the various economic and social restrictions.

To make matters worse, economic uncertainties have wrought havoc on industries and businesses, leading to the loss of countless jobs, with many left struggling to fend for themselves and put food on the table.

The silver lining in the cloud, however, was the community spirit that prevailed in the face of adversity.

As Charles Dickens wrote in 'A Tale of Two Cities': "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

And indeed, so it was. The pandemic brought its fair share of adverse impacts felt worldwide, but it also saw Malaysians – both individuals and corporations – coming together to help those affected.

For Heineken Malaysia Bhd (Heineken Malaysia), it reached out with a helping hand by launching the Heineken Cares community food aid programme in July 2021, on the back of the 'Bendera Putih' movement.

In collaboration with eight non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community organisations, the brewer delivered over 250,000 meals to vulnerable communities across the nation for a six-month period until December last year.

That said, even as Malaysia transitions to the recovery phase, new challenges have emerged. Food security is increasingly becoming a major concern, amidst the decrease in employment opportunities, coupled with a lack of precautionary savings among households.

With escalating food prices resulting from inflation, more than half of Malaysian households – as revealed by the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) – are concerned about their ability to feed and support their families.

In response to this shifting landscape, Heineken Malaysia is answering the call by not only

bringing back its Heineken Cares programme, but also aiming for lasting impact.

Once again joining hands with NGOs and community partners, the programme has a renewed mission to build community resilience through long-term food security for communities in need.

Heineken Malaysia corporate affairs and legal director Renuka Indrarajah said, "As part of our social sustainability commitment, we aim to make a positive impact for Malaysian communities.

"This year, we want to move beyond providing short-term relief to communities in need and take it a step further by empowering local communities to start and maintain a sustainable food supply.

"The NGOs and community partners we collaborate with will be building small scale community farms in both urban and rural localities. In suitable areas, we will also leverage rainwater harvesting to support these farming systems with a sustainable source of water."

Heineken Cares also connects employee wellness with a community purpose. One way the brewer does this is by converting the number of steps employees take into a target number of meals for communities.

In 2021, for every 1,000 steps an employee made, the Heineken Cares programme delivered one meal to someone in need.

But Heineken Malaysia is looking to continue the laudable initiative, as it will announce a new target at the official launch of the programme this year.

"With Heineken Cares, every step counts and every meal matters.

"Through the initiative, not only are we empowering local communities, we are also providing our employees with a greater sense of purpose, as their commitment to living a healthier lifestyle would result in real impact towards improving the lives of communities in need.

"This year, we will also launch an employee volunteerism programme to give our people opportunities to support the efforts of our NGO partners. We tell our people that our business cannot thrive unless the communities we operate in thrive also," she added.

Amongst the seven NGOs and community partners who will be coming onboard to support the Heineken Cares programme in 2022 are PWD Smart Farmability,



(from left) Soroptimist International's Dr Saradha Narayanan, EPIC's Oei and Heineken Malaysia's Renuka.



EPIC and Soroptimist International Malaysia.

PWD Smart Farmability

PWD Smart Farmability founder Dr Billy Tang said, "Our partnership with Heineken Malaysia has always been fruitful! Last year, PWD Smart Farmability had the opportunity to be a part of Heineken Cares, where we distributed ethically farmed organic fish and vegetables to orphanages, hospitals, as well as many other affected communities during the prolonged lockdown.

"This year, we are proud to be able to continue the good work of providing nutritious fish protein and nutrient-dense vegetables to communities in need."

Through the partnership, it is planning to build satellite farms for welfare centres in seven regions in Peninsular Malaysia.

By setting up the farms, these communities can now enjoy fresh, organic and nutritious meat and vegetables, even without agricultural knowledge.

"We know that by joining forces with Heineken Cares, we will surely be able to go beyond and achieve so much more," he added.

EPIC

Meanwhile, EPIC founder John-Son Oei pointed out that Malaysia's prolonged lockdowns in the past few years revealed the need to support vulnerable communities, especially in establishing food security among the Orang Asli.

He shared, "This year, we are grateful to receive support from Heineken Malaysia through the Heineken Cares programme once again.

"We hope to further improve the Orang Asli's livelihood, by channeling the funds into providing sustainable water supply and farming programmes to the communities."



Heineken Cares and EPIC are uniting again to further improve the Orang Asli's livelihood.

These include Orang Asli communities in Kampung Orang Asli Gurney and Kampung Orang Asli Sg Kelubi in Hulu Selangor.

"In turn, our initiatives will help the communities adapt to the unpredictable environment, as our nation goes through the recovery phase. EPIC looks forward to working together with the Heineken Malaysia team to maximise the impact of this fund," he enthused.

Soroptimist International

Dr Saradha Narayanan, the assistant programme director 2 for Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific, chimed in and shared the global volunteer organisation's positive experience working with Heineken Malaysia since 2018 to transform the lives of underprivileged communities.

She said, "Through our long-term partnership, we successfully channelled clean water to rural communities in Sabah.

At the height of the pandemic, Soroptimist International Damansara partnered with Heineken Cares to deliver food aid to the B40 communities in Kampung Jawa, Klang."

In the next phase of this project, Soroptimist International Region of Malaysia, together with Heineken Cares, will be providing alternative water systems and organic farms in Long Tanyit, Belaga, Sarawak and Kg Gana, Kota Marudu, Sabah.

"Apart from that, we are also looking into training programmes and capacity development that will empower women from these villages to make a living from the sales of home-grown vegetables," she added.

Through these collaborations, Heineken Malaysia aims to create and sustain real positive impact for local communities in need. The Heineken Cares programme is administered by Spark Foundation, Heineken Malaysia's corporate social responsibility arm.

Focusing on a people-centric approach

ESG Positive Impact Awards 2022 to underline projects that work towards just and equitable progress

By **CALYN YAP**
calyn@thestar.com.my

TO push forward the social agenda of environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles, the ESG Positive Impact Awards 2022 seeks to recognise initiatives and efforts by businesses that contribute towards equitable and sustainable development for all.

Earthworm Foundation country head Karl Yen Quek lauded Star Media Group for launching the awards programme. He believes that the event stands out and can help accelerate interest amongst corporate Malaysia to institutionalise ESG in their operations.

“Star Media Group has done well to make the ESG Positive Impact Awards a reality. Companies are looking and building their understanding on what they can do better across the ESG themes. We hope events like this can help inspire companies to dig deep into their values and from there create their own path of sustainable development.

“This is a platform to acknowledge all the hard work; an opportunity to showcase the value created and inspire the others to follow. Be proud of the journey started and humble in continuing to learn and improve further. When you win, we all win,” he opined.

Meanwhile, the Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs

(IDEAS) said in a statement that the awards would identify and give recognition to the businesses that have done a great job in adopting the spirit of the ESG in their operations.

It said, “With greater emphasis given on the way they operate in their environment, businesses can thrive more in a sustainable manner.”

Sharing that more and more businesses are using the ESG compass to gauge risks and opportunity growth – in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – it noted that ESG also helps in encouraging businesses to adopt higher standards of operation.

“When investing and trading in and with developed countries, ESG guidelines play a crucial role in sustaining these ties. With this, policymakers need to take into account recommendations that are ESG-friendly that will benefit businesses, the government as well as the society,” it added.

Eye on people

Touching on the broad range of categories under the social pillar, Earthworm Foundation’s Quek shared the non-profit organisation’s (NGO) hope to see innovations and best practices of companies in upholding the principles reflected in the awards’ scope.



“There are many leaders and creative approaches that we can learn and take inspiration from. Reviewing and sharing all the successful case studies is an important step to reach scale in Malaysia and it has a mutual benefit especially for companies participating and keen observers.

“For Earthworm Foundation, we are particularly keen on the human rights and labour stand-

ards category, as we see this as an important area for growth and improvement in Malaysia.

“With the increased scrutiny and expectations of foreign markets, companies in Malaysia must demonstrate their ability to meet the demands and assure the best labour standards are upheld,” he said.

In doing so, companies must continuously advocate the social aspect in ESG within all their operations, alongside the accumulation of knowledge and experience over time.

He explained, “The need to innovate and improve is perpetual and boundaries will have to be explored and broken. The awareness and understanding of the public have grown to be able to discern between creating real value and greenwashing.

“Hence, companies need to embody ESG values and principles at the core and not just follow the trend.”

Tackling urgent issues

IDEAS, on the other hand, pointed out that there are urgent social ESG issues that need to be addressed, particularly in the areas of worker safety, as well as human capital development and management.

“As part of the country’s journey to retain and attract both skilled

and unskilled workers, policies related to workers’ rights and development need to be given ample attention to. Adopting laws that are in line with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention is a start, but the implementation on the ground needs to be extensive as well, covering all sectors,” it said.

The ESG Positive Impact Awards 2022 is organised by Star Media Group Bhd, with OCBC Bank (Malaysia) Bhd as main sponsor.

Ernst & Young is the advisor of the awards programme, while working partners include ABAC Centre of Excellence, Business Council for Sustainable Development (BCSD) Malaysia, Climate Governance Malaysia, Earthworm Foundation, Green Growth Asia Foundation, Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS), Malaysia Green Building Council, Malaysian Green Tech and Climate Change Centre, Malaysian Institute of Corporate Governance, Jeffrey Sachs Centre, Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), as well as the Malaysian Research Accelerator for Technology and Innovation (MRANTI).

Submit now for the ESG Positive Impact 2022 Awards. To find out more, visit <https://staresgawards.com.my/>.

ESG Positive Impact Awards 2022 SOCIAL

AWARD CATEGORIES

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Awarded to an organisation that has initiated and led action(s) to remove barriers, as well as improve work experience and engagement levels of employees and the value chain – whilst demonstrating excellence in the delivery of services, without considering factors such as age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social mobility, disability and gender.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND LABOUR STANDARDS

Awarded to an organisation that has advanced fundamental human rights and responsible labour practices throughout their operations, where they uphold fundamental human rights principles in all ways that they interact with people (employees, consumers, customers, suppliers, contractors and community members).

RELATIONS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Recognising an organisation that has developed and implemented a programme to positively impact and strengthen links with the local community and indigenous people within the locality in which the company operates. The programme should respond to a specific need in the community and should focus on the measures taken to engage with the community and all relevant stakeholders, as well as the positive impact delivered through the programme.

TALENT MANAGEMENT

Recognising an organisation that has developed and implemented effective, consistent and all rounded training programmes, where it has enabled the talent to execute business strategies and contribute to long-term success of the organisation.

GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Recognising an organisation that has developed and implemented effective programmes to promote the health and wellbeing of employees, which has contributed to the overall improvement in productivity and increase in satisfaction and morale of staff.



RECOGNISING EXEMPLARY ESG ACHIEVEMENTS

Star Media Group and OCBC Bank are proud to introduce the ESG Positive Impact Awards, giving Malaysian organisations of all sizes a prime opportunity to embrace and showcase exemplary ESG practices in their business model and gain better market access in the long run.

Whether you're an SME or a large conglomerate, this is your chance to inspire your peers, reassure your customers, investors and stakeholders by being recognised as one of Malaysia's leading companies in championing ESG.

ESG Award Categories

 <p>ENVIRONMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sustainable Ecosystems ▶ Water Management and Efficiency ▶ Waste Management ▶ Responsible Consumption & Production ▶ Renewable Energy ▶ Energy Efficiency 	 <p>SOCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Diversity, Equity and Inclusion ▶ Relations with Local Communities ▶ Human Rights & Labour Standards ▶ Talent Management ▶ Good Health and Wellbeing 	 <p>GOVERNANCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Governance, Reporting & Transparency 	 <p>OTHERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Supply Chain Management ▶ Innovative Partnership ▶ Transformation
--	---	---	--

Submission is now open. Download the submission pack today and submit your application form online.



✉ esg@thestar.com.my 📞 603-7964 6600 🌐 StarESGAwards.com.my

Organised By:



Main Sponsor:



Co-Sponsor:



Endorsed By:



Working Partners:



Official Radio:



Advisor:



SMALL ACTS

BIG IMPACTS

USEFUL WAYS to recycle OLD NEWSPAPERS

Compiled by RUBY LIM
 rubylim@thestar.com.my

ALTHOUGH the Internet has become the go-to avenue when it comes to finding information, bear in mind that newspapers still have their place in a society that cares about quality information.

The fact is that newspapers can be one source of information, readers can have all the day's information right at their fingertips without having to search multiple websites to piece news together. Readers can be confident in the

accuracy of information and this is a big advantage to people who want news straight up, instead of cross-checking its credibility.

As your habit of newspapers quickly turns into a gigantic pile of sheets, why not give these sheets a new lease of life first, instead of sending them straight to the dump?

You will be surprised at the number of uses an old newspaper can have. Try some of the suggestions below the next time you want to dispose of your old newspaper collection.

1) WINDOW CLEANING



Scrunch up a few sheets into newspaper balls to use for scrubbing the windows with your favourite glass cleaner.

2) PET LITTER LINER

Place the sheets on open space to toilet train your pet or use it to line your pet's litter box.



3) PACKING MATERIAL



Newspapers are a great eco-friendly substitute for bubble wrap and works perfectly to wrap around fragile items before postage or storage.

4) PAPIER-MÂCHÉ



Unleash your creativity and keep both adults and children entertained with this fun craft activity by using just newspapers and glue.

5) FRUIT AND VEGETABLE WRAPPER



Wrap fruits and vegetables with newspaper sheets to store and extend the lifespan of these greens.

6) STAIN PROTECTION

Definitely helps lessen cleaning work by layering any surfaces with the sheets to prevent messes, such as a paint job, eating session, potting plants or even catching leaks in the refrigerator.



7) ODOUR REMOVAL

Crumple up balls of newspaper and stuff them into smelly shoes. Leave it overnight and say goodbye to smelly odours. For containers, just leave some torn newspaper inside before storage to absorb any smells.



8) GARBAGE LINER

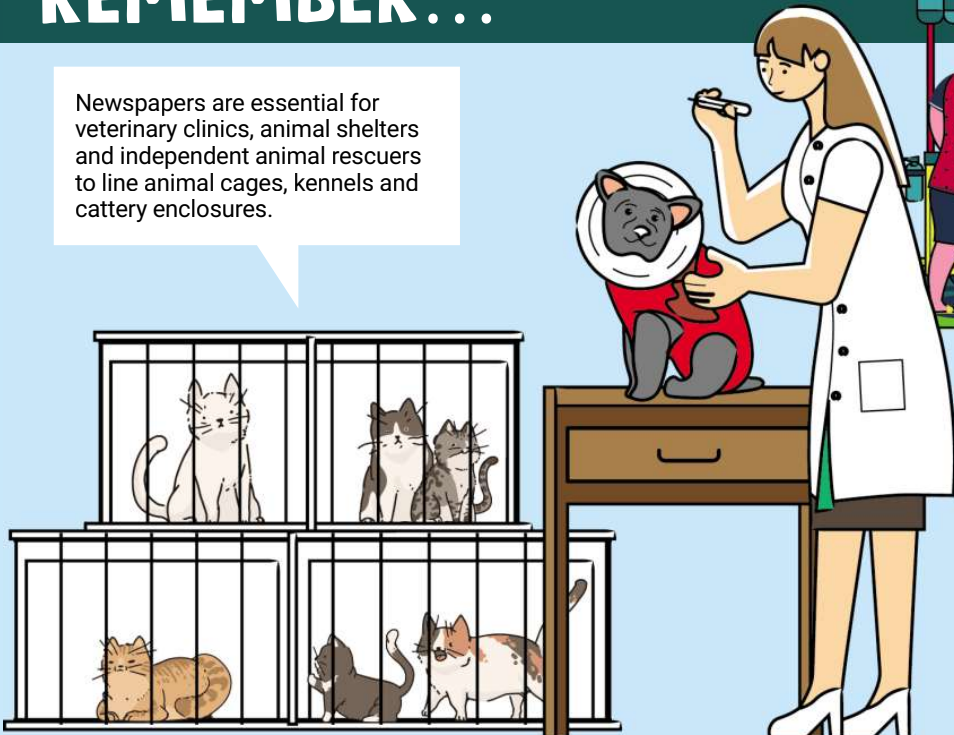


Put several layers of newspaper at the bottom of your bins to catch leaks. It will make cleanup a lot easier.



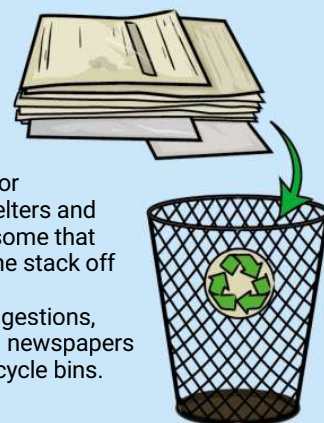
REMEMBER...

Newspapers are essential for veterinary clinics, animal shelters and independent animal rescuers to line animal cages, kennels and cattery enclosures.



If you still have old newspapers left or wish to donate rather than reuse, you can always ask around local business owners or local animal rescue shelters and you will definitely find some that will be happy to clear the stack off your hands.

Other than these suggestions, you can still recycle old newspapers by putting them into recycle bins.



Sellers selling fragile items use newspapers to wrap the products, while some market traders are still using the papers to wrap vegetables, fish or even your favourite nasi lemak.



Stay tuned to the next issue to find out how you can make a difference to a better future.