

Title Quality and safety of Agri-foods in Malaysia
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Citation Book of abstracts, APS2010 & SEAsia2010 & GMS2010, August 2-4, 2010, Radisson Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
Keyword Economy; safety; quality

Abstract

Agriculture remains an important sector of Malaysia's economy, contributing 12 percent to the national GDP and providing employment for 16 percent of the population. Food crops such as paddy, vegetables and fruits amounted up to 16% of total agriculture land. The quality of agriculture foods in Malaysia is given great emphasis in the current years. Agropolitan, the plan under the East Coast Economic Region (ECER), is thought to serve as agricultural hub providing quality seeds to good agriculture practices and business mentoring, which is expected to enhance industry practices, increase yield and supplement income stream. The quality of Agri-food in Malaysia is maintained through certification, standardisation and quality assurance. Quality Assurance is the key to consumer confidence in both domestic and export markets. Currently, the challenge faced by Malaysia is the lack of an internationally recognized Agriculture Standard. It is recommended that the Government, with the aid of Industry Councils, create an independent quality assurance body with widely acceptable global standards. The safety of agriculture food in Malaysia is currently upheld through co-operation between the Food Quality Control Division, Ministry of Health, as the lead agency for food safety and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Veterinary Services, Ministry of Agriculture, and Agro-based Industries. The policies and programmes on food safety are generally science based to promote confidence through tangible evidence. The National Food Safety Policy endorsed by the National Food Safety and Nutrition Council 2001 has identified several key elements including education on food safety and gathering of scientific information and analysis which can contribute towards strengthening the nations' food safety programme and to create a society of well-informed consumers.