



Photo by Tracey Pavlishin
Kearney, Chicago

**Transforming
Malaysia
into a more
food-secure
nation**

KEARNEY

Food security can have far-reaching implications for a country's economic, political, and social climate. A collaborative approach with the public and private sectors can build a stronger, healthier, and more resilient Malaysia.

Executive summary

Malaysia has an urgent need to address food security as a top item on the national agenda. The country is not self-sufficient for many food items, and the situation is worsening. As a result, Malaysia is depending even more on imports, and the intake of proteins and micronutrients remains inadequate.

Now more than ever, Malaysia needs to build its domestic food resilience as the world is facing major global supply chain disruptions and geopolitical conflicts, making the need to secure food sources and availability a major challenge for every nation. Although there have been attempts to address food security, four challenges are especially crucial:

- Malaysia's policies focus on food staples but need to pivot to prioritize nutritional categories as well.
- Government bodies lack a coordinated farm-to-fork method to address the issues and will benefit from a more comprehensive approach.
- There is an opportunity to identify and prioritize an extended list of food items beyond just the staples and set a strategy around each food item.
- Food crops are not as lucrative as oil palm, leading to underinvestment and low productivity.

It's time for Malaysia to address these issues. In this paper, we discuss five focus areas to safeguard the country's food security:

- Proactively manage the balance of production versus imports of food items.
- Shape food demand and consumption.
- Develop strategic partnerships, and foster collaboration.
- Accelerate tech-enabled local production.
- Engineer future-readiness into the global supply chain.

Looking to other countries, there are many precedents for tackling similar challenges. For example, Singapore focused on managing its import dependency risk and ability to manage supply chain disruptions by diversifying its import sources from 140 countries in 2004 to more than 170 in 2019, and Qatar focused on driving up its domestic production of dairy products by investing in a large dairy producer and has achieved 80 percent self-sufficiency for dairy products.

Malaysia can address the five areas of food security with three focused actions on legislative policies to achieve a sustainable food system, targeted investments to drive R&D and innovation, and partnerships with the private sector to support the national food agenda.

National food security is becoming a top priority

The United Nations Committee on World Food Security defines food security as that “all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.”

The past few years have seen unprecedented global supply chain disruptions caused by escalating trade wars and prolonged pandemic lockdowns, and as a result, many countries have sought out ways to become more self-sufficient and less reliant on global trade, especially for food. In addition, geopolitical tensions, intensified by the Russia–Ukraine conflict, will create mounting and sustained trade and supply chain challenges and escalating food prices.

Forward-thinking countries are shoring up their domestic resilience and production in food supplies. Ensuring public confidence that food will be available and affordable and safeguarding the sustainability of the agri-food sector must be high on the agenda if Malaysia is to achieve its vision of becoming a developed nation.

Malaysia will need to make healthy food more widely available and encourage citizens to incorporate higher-nutrition foods into their diets.

Malaysia’s food security remains challenged

Malaysia’s transition from a predominantly agricultural economy to an industrialized economy (value-added manufacturing) has been impeded. Since 2020, political risk and uncertainty have eroded investors’ confidence. While total foreign direct investment (FDI) net inflow into Malaysia has picked back up to pre-pandemic levels at RM 48.1 billion in 2021 after suffering a 60 percent drop to RM 13.3 billion in 2020, investments into the agriculture sector are very low at RM 0.7 billion in 2021, just 1.5 percent of the total FDI net inflow.

The lack of funds for R&D and innovation within the agricultural sector (for example, for raising yields or for new technology to expand food production) limits the ability to enhance Malaysia’s agriculture productivity in support of the national food security agenda. In contrast, Malaysia’s neighbors, including Indonesia and Vietnam, are attracting much more funding support in the agriculture sector.

Malaysia’s standing in the 2021 Global Food Security Index is in the second quartile, placing the country 39th out of 113 nations (see figure 1 on page 3). Compared with leading Asian countries such as Singapore and Japan, the gap is even wider with Malaysia lagging the Asian giants. At the subset criteria level, Malaysia scored even lower for quality and safety in relation to nutrition adequacy with a ranking of 46. Specifically, Malaysia is behind in two key nutrition-related components—protein and micronutrients—and correspondingly, the country has high rates of obesity (13 percent), diabetes (18.3 percent), and high blood pressure (38.1 percent). To become a healthier society, Malaysia will need to make healthy food more widely available and encourage citizens to incorporate higher-nutrition foods into their diets.

Malaysia’s food security challenges are exacerbated by its limited self-sufficiency in key food items. Domestically, 26 items under the selected agricultural commodities recorded Self-Sufficiency Ratio (SSR) of more than 100 percent in 2021. Of those 26 items, fruits and vegetables make up the majority at 65 percent, and chicken and duck eggs are the only item in the important protein category that exceeded 100 percent SSR.

Figure 1

Malaysia is lagging in food security compared with other Asian countries

	Southeast Asia				Asia (Others)		
	Malaysia	Singapore	Thailand	Indonesia	Japan	South Korea	China
2021 Global Food Security Index rank¹	39th	15th	51st	69th	8th	32nd	34th
Quality and Food Safety Index rank²	46th	43rd	73rd	95th	30th	44th	56th



Within quality and food safety, Malaysia is behind in two key nutrition-related components:

Micronutrient availability score³	79.7	96.8	54.1	54.3	80.5	86.5	84.2
Protein quality score³	79.5	85.3	56.6	45.1	87.3	91.1	80.6

¹ The Global Food Security Index considers a mathematical weighting of four factors: affordability, availability, quality and safety, and natural resources and resilience.

² The Quality and Food Safety Index measures the variety and nutritional quality of average diets as well as the safety of the food. Categories considered include dietary diversity, nutritional standards, micronutrient availability, protein quality, and food safety.

³ Scores are represented on a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 being the best.

Sources: Global Food Security Food Index, World Health Organization; Kearney analysis

Malaysia’s self-sufficiency for key food items such as fresh milk and beef has been decreasing, with a corresponding increasing reliance on imports (see figure 2 on page 4). In 2021, Malaysia was unable to meet SSR targets for select food items such as rice, fresh milk, beef, and coconut. Furthermore, the SSR decreased across most food items from 2020 to 2021. A consequent increase in imports is expected to result in higher food prices; the Import Dependency Ratio for 2021 increased across most food items. This trend of declining food self-sufficiency and increased import dependency is not unique to Malaysia; multiple countries across Southeast Asia have faced a similar situation amid pandemic-related supply chain disruptions.

Despite prioritizing food security, Malaysia faces an array of challenges

Malaysia is recognizing the importance of food security and has initiated multiple actions, including forming Large-Scale Smart Field Projects (SMART SBB), setting up the National Food Security Policy by the Cabinet Committee on Food Security chaired by the prime minister, and creating the National Food Security Policy 2021-2025, which covers strategies and initiatives to ensure food security. Policy reforms have also been implemented to stabilize food prices and attract FDI to improve R&D.

Figure 2

Malaysia's self-sufficiency for key food items has been declining

2021 SSR and IDR for food items with an SSR of less than 100%

Non-exhaustive

Food item	Self-Sufficiency Ratio (SSR) ¹			Import Dependency Ratio (IDR) ²			
	2020 SSR (%)	2021 SSR (%)	SSR Change (%)	2020 IDR (%)	2021 IDR (%)	IDR Change (%)	
Fruits	Mango	20.2	16.2	-19.8	86.2	92.6	7.4
	Coconut	66.6	69.6	4.5	34.0	31.8	-6.5
	Mangosteen	93.1	93.8	0.8	16.1	13.9	-13.7
	Rambutan	98.1	99.4	1.3	3.4	3.8	11.8
Vegetables	Chili	30.9	29.3	-5.2	72.4	75.1	3.7
	Round cabbage	37.5	40.3	7.5	63.6	61.3	-3.6
	Mustard	97.6	97.0	-0.6	7.0	7.0	—
Livestock	Mutton	9.6	10.7	11.5	90.4	89.4	-1.1
	Beef	22.2	18.9	-14.9	78.1	81.6	4.5
	Fresh milk	65.0	56.7	-12.8	53.5	62.9	17.6
	Pork	94.9	93.4	-1.6	5.8	7.1	22.4
	Chicken meat	98.2	99.9	1.7	4.2	6.1	45.2
Fisheries	Sardine	80.7	74.9	-7.2	19.7	25.5	29.4
	Cuttlefish	96.6	80.0	-17.2	52.2	65.3	25.1
	Torpedo scad	96.7	93.8	-3.0	4.0	8.3	107.5
	Stingray	N.A.	96.7	N.A.	N.A.	6.9	N.A.
	Seabass	N.A.	97.3	N.A.	N.A.	3.1	N.A.
	Tuna	108.1	98.8	-8.6	2.4	5.8	141.7
	Tilapia	99.9	99.0	-0.9	1.4	2.5	78.6
	Threadfin Bream	N.A.	99.7	N.A.	N.A.	0.9	N.A.
Others	Ginger	18.9	14.6	-22.8	81.5	86.5	6.1
	Sweet potato	75.6	78.1	3.3	26.3	25.2	-4.2
	Lime	91.1	82.4	-9.5	16.8	27.9	66.1
	Rice	63.0	65.0	3.2	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

¹ The SSR calculates the percentage of food consumed that is produced domestically. The higher the ratio, the higher the percentage of domestic production.

² The IDR indicates a country's dependence on imports of agricultural commodities to meet domestic needs. A higher IDR shows that an increased supply of agricultural commodities is to be imported.

Sources: Supply and Utilization Account Selected Agricultural Commodities, Department of Statistics Malaysia; Kearney analysis

In its 2023 budget, the government allocated RM 5.32 billion to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries, an increase of 10.4 percent compared with 2022. Among the subsidies and aid programs for farmers and fishermen, there are notable inclusions of specific programs targeting agro-tech start-ups and sustainable farming. Although this is a step in the right direction, time will tell if this is enough to turn the tide.

As a net food importer, the country is especially vulnerable to disruptions in the global supply chain. Other factors such as climate change and population dietary changes will continue to pose challenges to Malaysia's food security. To achieve a satisfactory level of food security, Malaysia will need to not only become more self-sufficient, but also integrate capital, technology, and labor to make food production more efficient and sustainable.

Malaysia faces four major limitations:

Policy limitations: price ceilings focused on staples with slow progress on improving nutritional value

Malaysia has instituted a price ceiling for some food staples, such as sugar, wheat flour, and cooking oil. Although these policies are good, these items do not make substantial contributions to nutritional value as they are lacking in micronutrients and proteins. In addition, these price ceilings might incentivize people to consume less nutritious food.

Although there is a National Plan of Action for Nutrition of Malaysia, it has failed to achieve several of its targets for improving dietary practices. Specifically, protein energy malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies continue to be a problem. The plan's limited progress can be attributed to the fact that many of its strategic plans were not implemented, such as the suggestion to set up a National Institute of Nutrition. In addition, budget allocation to address malnutrition remains inadequate, and the breakdown of how much funding is dedicated to improving nutrition is unclear. For example, the government has not indicated how much money is allocated for nutrition research.

Figure 3

Food security is a top priority, but MAFI lacks farm-to-fork oversight due to its main focus on agriculture

	Malaysia	Thailand	Indonesia	Singapore	China	Japan	South Korea
Food security and nutrition policies and initiatives	National Food Security Action Plan 2021–2025 National Nutritional Policy of Malaysia, 2016–2025; NPANM III	Food Security and Management (strategic framework for food management) Nutrition Action Plan	Government Regulation No. 68/2002 on Food Security National Food and Nutrition Action Plan 2015–2019	Food security target (30 by 30) and ensuing initiatives, such as developing farming spaces Nutrition guidelines, such as healthy meals in schools	Grain security (14th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025) and food security (National Security Strategy (2021–2025)) National Nutrition Plan (2017–2030)	Food security (basic plan for food, agriculture, and rural areas, 2015) Nutrition guidelines (Japanese Food Guide Spinning Top (JFG-ST)	Food security (Recover, Inclusion, Leap: Korea 2021) Health and nutrition (National Health Promotion Act, 2016)
	Badan Ketahanan Pangan oversees food security, maintains food price stability, and develops food consumption and safety guidelines.						
Food security governing body	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries (MAFI)	Food and Drug Administration and the Ministry of Agriculture	Badan Ketahanan Pangan	Singapore Food Agency	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic Of China	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries	The Korea Food and Drug Administration

1 Malaysia is on par with other Asian countries in relation to developing policies and initiatives on food security and nutrition.

2 However, MAFI does not have end-to-end oversight of all activities from farm-to-fork.

MAFI is also not a dedicated food security agency.

Note: NPANM III is the National Plan of Action for Nutrition of Malaysia III.

Source: Kearney analysis

Approach limitations: no coordinated farm-to-fork approach

Malaysia does not have a unified approach and collaboration across government bodies to drive the national food security agenda, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries only looks at the agricultural aspects, not the whole farm-to-fork process from agricultural production to consumption (see figure 3). For example, although Malaysia has set a target to cut its food waste in half by 2030, efforts to expand awareness about food waste is still lacking compared with China, which launched a Clean Plate campaign to put a spotlight on the food waste crisis. Malaysia's attempts to focus on food security at the government level can still be improved. A set of more concrete policy targets and action plans to enhance food security and sustainability should be considered, similar to Singapore's 30 by 30 initiative and China's annual rural policy blueprint.

Focus limitations: a limited strategy for securing key food items

There is a lack of clarity on the national strategy for focused food items beyond the staples of rice, wheat flour, chicken, eggs, and cooking oil. There is a long list of food categories and items that are tracked at the national level for production and consumption, but there is a limited view of a target list of food items for security. SSR targets are set for a multitude of food items; however, there is a lack of planning and visibility on how to get to the SSR targets, such as enablers to push up production, growth rates to target, and available incentives.

Malaysia will do well to identify and prioritize a list of food items and set a strategy around each food item, such as boosting production or maintaining current production levels and increase the number of import sources or building up the storage of the food item. Each of these strategies will be dependent on the suitability of production against the ease of import for each food item.

Inherent industry limitations: the unattractive economics of food crops

The industrial crop agenda has compromised the push for national food security because food crops are not lucrative for growers, most of whom prefer to plant industrial crops such as oil palms as they give a better financial yield—creating a vicious cycle with even more land being dedicated to industrial crops. In fact, five million hectares of land are being cultivated for palm oil compared with just one million hectares for food crops. Amid the ongoing shortage of production because of low productivity and limited technological advancement, expanding the domestic supply of food crops will continue to be a challenge.

Five focus areas to ensure food security in Malaysia

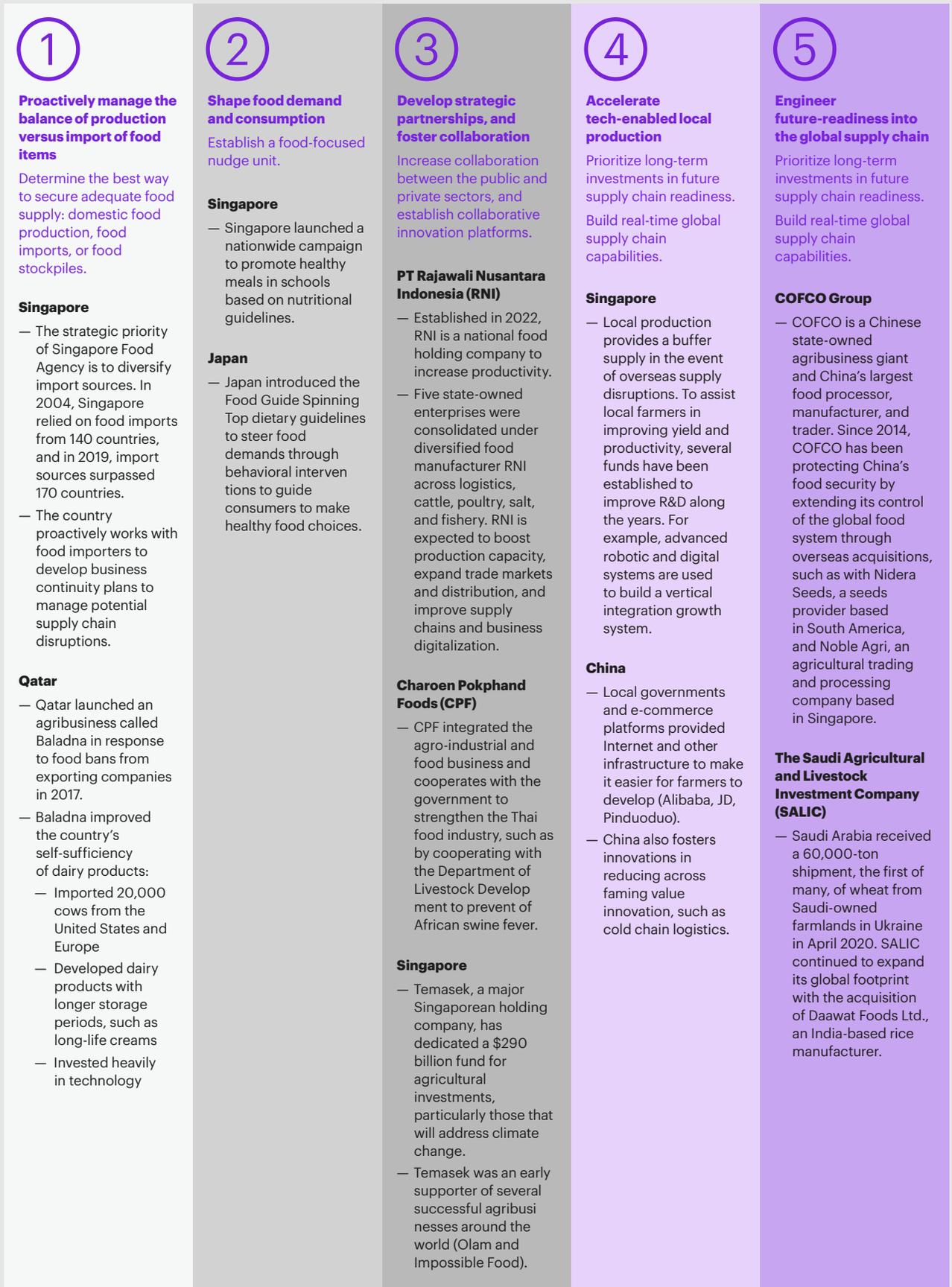
Disruptions of the global supply chain due to COVID-19 and trade wars have led to a drastic increase in logistics costs. As a net importer, Malaysia is vulnerable to volatility in global and regional supply chains. For example, the Russia–Ukraine conflict has exacerbated the price hike for poultry because of higher prices for imported animal feed. Ensuring reasonable food prices by expanding local production is crucial to Malaysia's food security status.

Focusing on five areas can help the government improve the country's food ecosystems, gain more control, and ensure food security for the nation (see figure 4 on page 7).

As a net importer, Malaysia is vulnerable to volatility in global and regional supply chains.

Figure 4

Malaysia can navigate the global food ecosystem by focusing on five areas



Source: Kearney analysis

Proactively manage the balance of production versus import of food items

There are three main ways to secure an adequate food supply: domestic food production, food imports, and food stockpiling and storage. It is necessary to assess the suitability of domestic production versus the ease of import for each strategically important food item to determine best approach for increasing the supply of various food items. If an item is easy to grow locally and is produced efficiently in Malaysia, subsidies and investments in technology can be pursued to substantially increase domestic production. If, on the other hand, the item is not suitable for domestic production, Malaysia could instead focus on diversifying import sources and developing bilateral agreements with the top exporters (see sidebar: Kearney's food security assessment in Malaysia on page 9).

Two other countries have successfully managed the balance of trade in food to address risks associated with import dependencies. Singapore is ensuring food security by rapidly diversifying its import sources and working with food importers on strategies to manage supply chain disruptions. Its import sources grew from 140 countries in 2004 to more than 170 in 2019. Meanwhile, Qatar has prioritized domestic production. Until 2017, Qatar relied heavily on food imports and faced major instability when top exporters blocked its access to staple foods. In response, an agricultural company called Baladna was founded to enhance domestic production of dairy products, importing 20,000 cows from the United States and Europe. The company addressed food security challenges with innovative products such as long-life creams and spreadable cheeses that can be stored longer. Baladna has transformed Qatar's dairy self-sufficiency and can meet 80 percent of local demand for dairy products. The scheme was so successful that there are now plans for Baladna to partner with FGV and Touch Group to develop a climate-independent dairy farm in Malaysia.

Shape food demand and consumption

Food consumption should be managed because consumer demand impacts the food markets and the future of food ecosystems. Governments can shape food demand and consumption to maximize citizens' health and well-being while contributing to national food security. For instance, Japan's dietary guidelines, the Food Guide Spinning Top, suggests a recommended daily intake of items in a visually appealing way. The Spinning Top has a symbolic meaning: a nutritious diet is necessary to ensure the top continues spinning. Studies have shown that awareness of the Spinning Top positively impacted eating behaviors, and citizens who were aware of the campaign had a better diet than those who were not.

Develop strategic partnerships, and foster collaboration

Strategic partnerships should be developed not only within countries, but also between governments and the private sector. Collaboration between the public and private sectors can help build a more sustainable and strategic food ecosystem. By working with a range of partners in the government and in the private sector, government ministries responsible for food and food security can amplify their impact. For example, Singapore has improved its food security with its emphasis on strategic partnerships. Temasek, a major Singaporean holding company, is the fifth most active agricultural venture fund manager in the world. In 2012, it backed a \$750 million rights issue to the Olam Group, which went on to become a leading global trader of staple foods. Then in 2019, Temasek supported Impossible Foods in its mission to expand in Southeast Asia and served Impossible Burgers during a highly publicized Formula 1 event.

Kearney's food security assessment in Malaysia

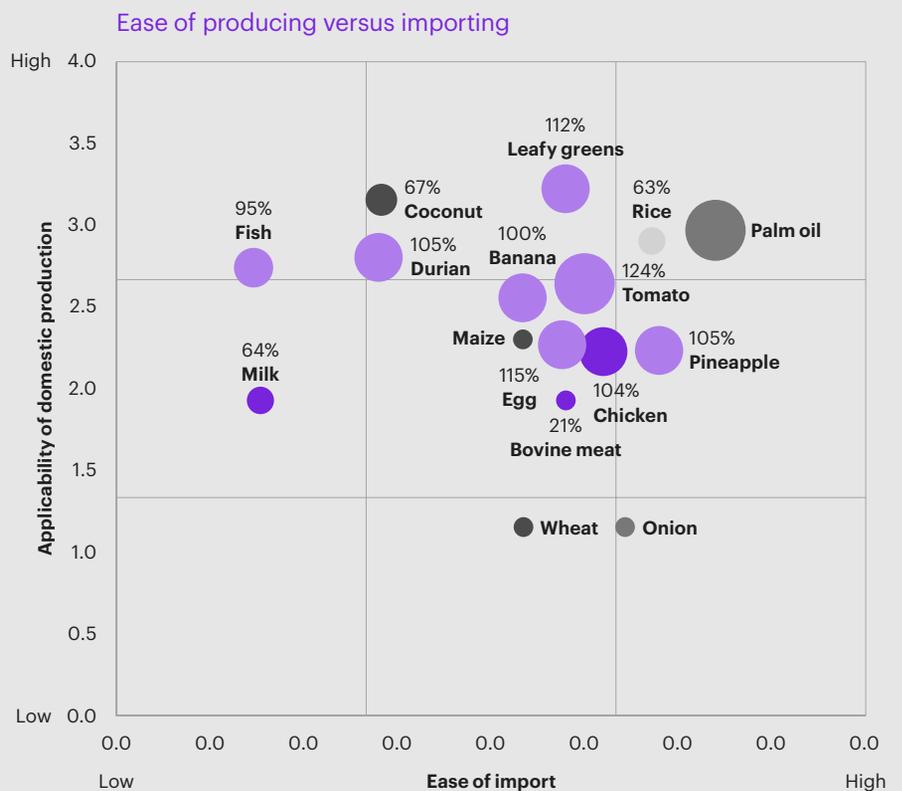
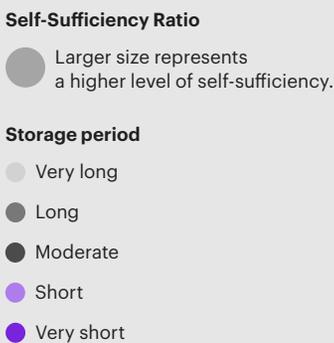
We analyzed the latest food consumption and production trends in Malaysia, prioritizing the most critical items based on production share, consumption share, and nutritive value (see figure). For each of the shortlisted items, we identified the best approach for achieving food security by determining which of the following three areas to focus on: domestic food production, food imports, or food stockpiles.

To determine which foods to prioritize for domestic production, we considered the current production efficiency and the suitability of the local climate. To assess the ease of import, we analyzed the geopolitical risks and volatility of global supply to predict the likelihood of global disruptions affecting food availability. We also considered the proximity of top exporters to Malaysia, which impacts the time and cost of importing. And finally, to identify items that are suitable for food reserves, we assessed the product shelf life at various temperatures.

Our assessment provided clarity on the next steps needed to achieve food security in Malaysia. As a result of our research, we have identified four key takeaways:

- Maintain production of foods that Malaysia is already self-sufficient in—leafy greens, bananas, eggs, and chicken—as all are moderately to highly suitable for domestic production.
- Strike a balance between increasing domestic production and importing to improve food security of staple grains.
- Promote a balanced diet by prioritizing protein-rich foods such as milk and fish.
- Build stockpiles and diversify the import landscape for items with very low production, such as bovine meat, wheat, and onions.

Figure
A wide range of food is suitable for production in Malaysia, but balance against ease of import is required



Source: Kearney analysis

Accelerate tech-enabled local production

Accelerating tech-enabled food production can drive sustainable domestic agriculture production growth. Domestic production should be scaled up to withstand complex global supply chain disruptions. Especially in regions with limited growing capacity and natural resources, governments should transition by attracting talent, know-how, and resources away from traditional farming toward new technologies and their applications. China, for instance, has invested in cold chain logistics to lengthen the shelf life of food items and reduce food waste. In 2021, the government announced a Five-Year Plan for using 5G, smart sorting equipment, and logistics robots to improve delivery routes and enable food availability during off-seasons.

Engineer future-readiness into the global supply chain

The need to engineer future-readiness into the supply chain is inevitable given the frequent, acute, and complex global supply chain operations. Capabilities to enhance the understanding of both the current and future global dynamics shaping supply chains should be built. Expansive measures to improve resilience and reliability of the country's position in global supply chains should be proactively taken. A good example of this is COFCO. This leading international, China-based agribusiness has acquired companies abroad, such as seed providers and agricultural trading corporations, to expand its control over the global supply chain. The company focuses on production of grains, oilseeds, and sugar and invests heavily in markets where there is potential for growth in these food items. For example, COFCO acquired a leading seeds manufacturer in South America (Nidera) and a major food processing and trading company in Singapore (Noble Agri). As a result, COFCO has expansive control over the supply chain, all the way from sourcing and production to transportation and distribution.

Three ways to achieve Malaysia's national food agenda

Implementing the five focus areas discussed in the previous section will require taking three key actions:

Create legislative policies to achieve a sustainable food system

Malaysia's national agricultural policies and plans have mostly focused on expanding domestic production, improving productivity, strengthening R&D, and monitoring food prices. For example, under the National Transformation 2050 master plan, Malaysia is aiming to achieve total self-sufficiency for rice by 2050.

Malaysia's food security policies currently follow a one-size-fits-all approach. Moving forward, legislative policies need to have a clear strategy that distinguishes between resources that should be directed toward increasing domestic production versus securing imports. This will ensure that the country proactively manages the balance of production versus imports of food items and gives the government more power to shape healthy food consumption. Malaysia's rice subsidy program is a good example of such a policy: it is clearly aimed at enhancing domestic production capacity of rice. Beyond the staples and proteins, it is important to take a comprehensive approach and ensure that items from a variety of food categories are represented. Malaysia can promote a balanced diet by prioritizing items with a high nutritional value and ensuring that there is sufficient intake of fat, carbohydrates, proteins, and micronutrients. By carefully considering nutritional value and focusing on foods that Malaysia has a "right to produce," legislative policies will be more effective in safeguarding food security.

The turnover rate in agriculture is high, so having a larger workforce is crucial. While efforts have been made to attract young farmers, such as the Universiti Putra Malaysia's Agripreneur Incubation Program, the government should take steps to build and retain labor in agriculture. Funding and loans should be more readily accessible for aspiring agripreneurs. To facilitate a transfer of knowledge, subsidized training programs to upskill labor can be provided, such as systematic planting techniques in vertical farming in a land-scarce Malaysia.

In addition, the government should consider a larger variety of downstream products and substitutes for key food items, such as wheat versus rice or eggs versus chicken for protein, which would help regulate the reliance on imports and tariffs on key food items.

Launch government investments to drive R&D to address food security and sustainability

The Malaysia Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) was established to undertake R&D on a variety of commodities, including rice, livestock, vegetables, and fruits. Climate change, changing patterns of food intake, and awareness of the increasingly limited resources in food production are factors that necessitate sustainable farming practices. Innovation and technology development can transform domestic production capabilities and promote sustainable agricultural practices.

Form partnerships with the private sector to support a national food agenda

The government can work with the private sector to push food ecosystems toward strategic outcomes. First, agricultural research, especially inputs and production systems, should be a shared responsibility so that the state can guide and facilitate private-sector innovation and development toward certain items, including rice, fresh milk, and high-value cash crops such as mangos and coconuts. Second, agriculture support services such as testing, input provision, and marketing can be effectively managed through private-sector resources along with government reach and coordination, such as production and distribution of condiments with less sugar and salt to elevate nutritional standards. Third, strategic reserves can be developed with the private sector's participation while alleviating the government's financial burden. For example, funding could enable breakthroughs in the

development of techniques to grow crops within Malaysia via vertical farming and indoor farms. Finally, closer interaction and collaboration between regulators, the private sector, and the government through regular touchpoints would help align stakeholders on a strategic direction.

One of the prime channels to increase collaboration with the private sector is establishing partnerships with consumer product manufacturers, which are well-placed to ensure better food security and health outcomes through various roles:

- **Resilient food supplier.** Ensure food availability and affordability through increased and consistent output to improve self-sufficiency.
- **Farming technology advocate.** Invest in and adopt best-in-class farming technology to ensure a greater yield.
- **Nutrition R&D powerhouse.** Develop high-quality, nutritious food products, and improve food processing capabilities to ensure demand certainty for growers.
- **Public education partner.** Collaborate with the government on education for better diets and nutrition.

For consumer product companies to be Malaysia's food and agriculture champion, they will need to have strong capabilities in key food items, including staples such as cooking ingredients and dairy, along with strong existing relationships with upstream growers, such as for food crops and palm, and a strong experienced leadership team with an ambition to expand and act in the interest of the people. Malaysia should provide regulatory support, such as tax incentives and product labeling, to consumer product manufacturers to ensure their actions are aligned with the national food agenda.

Through a combination of legislative policies, R&D investments, and private-sector partnerships, Malaysia can build resilience against supply chain disruptions and safeguard its food security.

Building a better tomorrow

Although ensuring food security is a challenging pursuit, the implications for good food security are far-reaching for the country's economic, political, and social arenas. Malaysia should drastically increase its support with farming technology, regulations, R&D investments, and getting private parties and citizens engaged in reducing their food waste. Prioritizing food security and taking a collaborative approach with not only government agencies but also the private sector will ensure a stronger, healthier, and more resilient Malaysia in the future.

Authors



Chee Chiew Wong

Partner, Kuala Lumpur
cheechiew.wong@kearney.com



Nikolai Dobberstein

Partner, Kuala Lumpur
nikolai.dobberstein@kearney.com



Hemanth Peyyeti

Partner, Singapore
hemanth.peyyeti@kearney.com

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