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NTU, Singapore Food Agency, and A*STAR launch Future Ready Food Safety Hub (FRESH)

Nanyang Technological University (NTU Singapore), in partnership with the Singapore Food Agency (SFA) and the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR), today officially launched the Future Ready Food Safety Hub (FRESH) hosted at NTU.

Witnessed by Ms Grace Fu, Minister for Sustainability and the Environment, NTU President Professor Subra Suresh, A*STAR Chairman Ms Chan Lai Fung and SFA Chairman Mr Lim Chuan Poh, the FRESH collaboration agreement was signed by NTU Senior Vice President (Research) Professor Lam Khin Yong, A*STAR CEO Mr Frederick Chew, and SFA CEO Mr Lim Kok Thai at the opening of Food Science and Technology Global 2021 (FST Global 2021) conference.

The conference, held at the Nanyang Executive Centre Auditorium in NTU, aims to bring together food, science, and technology experts from local and overseas institutions to share their research and innovation, and nurture new partnership and collaboration.

FRESH is set up to drive food safety research for 'Food Safety Science & Innovation' under the Singapore Food Story (SFS) R&D Programme. It is also tasked with helping build local food safety science capabilities in support of Singapore's growing food innovation ecosystem.

NTU Senior Vice President (Research) Professor Lam Khin Yong said: "NTU is pleased to partner with SFA and A*STAR under the framework of Singapore Food Story on both urban farming and alternative proteins, as well as advisory role on various panels and committees on food matters. NTU has also established strong engagement with food industry which has led to a number of consumer products developed from our food tech innovations. Our researchers are increasingly engaged in broader national effort in food security. In addition, our dynamic education and research in food science and technology and expertise from various schools and colleges would also be of value for inter-agency collaborations. The ongoing vibrant collaborative culture among the leadership and researchers in the three institutions has laid a strong foundation for a successful tripartite partnership on FRESH."

NTU Professor William Chen, the organising chair of FST Global 2021 will serve as Host Principal Investigator for FRESH. Prof Chen is also Director of NTU's Food Science and Technology (FST) programme.

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The executive committee of FRESH consists of Adjunct Associate Professor Joanne Chan from SFA, Professor Subodh Mhaisalkar from NTU Singapore, Adjunct Associate Professor Ralph Graichen from A*STAR, as well as other representatives from various Government agencies, Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) and relevant industries.

Adjunct Associate Professor Joanne Chan, Centre Director of the National Centre for Food Science (NCFS), at SFA, said: "FRESH provides an excellent opportunity for multi-disciplinary collaborations between researchers from various research institutions such as SIFBI in A*STAR, NTU, NUS and other IHLs.

"SFA will continue to work closely with the food industry on new food developments, as well as facilitate the exchange of food safety knowledge, experience and expertise, to support our '30 by 30' goal, which is to produce 30% of Singapore's nutritional needs locally by 2030."

Adjunct Associate Professor Ralph Graichen, Senior Director, Food & Consumer, Biomedical Research Council at A*STAR, and chair of the FRESH advisory committee, said: "By tapping on R&D to improve food safety and facilitate the introduction of novel foods to the market, Singapore is well on its way to becoming a leading agri-food and nutrition hub. We look forward to working together with NTU and SFA to drive safe product innovation, for improved health outcomes and to entrench Singapore in the high-value novel food industry."

The key objectives of FRESH

(i) To close the current gap in scientific capabilities for food safety risk assessment and validation, to support industry in new product development

(ii) To strengthen Singapore's food safety ecosystem, by providing a neutral platform to foster collaboration between regulators, public research performers and industry on food safety R&D

(iii) To enable regulatory responsiveness through early exposure of regulatory scientists to novel methodology developed in the food industry, to address breaking food safety issues early, and hence accelerate product time-to-market

FRESH builds upon Singapore's Research, Innovation and Enterprise 2020 (RIE2020) Plan, in which funding of up to S\$144 million was committed to the Singapore Food Story R&D Programme to drive innovation in the local food industry. The plan focuses on sustainable urban food production, future foods, advanced biotech-based protein production, as well as food safety science & innovation.

The glue that binds together expertise and teams

Talent development is key to Singapore's sustainable food security. As a platform for collaboration across institutions and disciplines, FRESH will provide new food safety support and complement existing efforts under the Singapore Food Story.

FRESH will bridge multiple disciplines, which include food science, microbiology, chemistry, toxicology, engineering, and communication sciences and will work with government, academic and industry stakeholders to build a unique collaborative tripartite R&D platform.

FRESH will also leverage expertise from the Singapore R&D ecosystem, such as A*STAR's Innovations in Food and Chemical Safety Programme, SFA's NCFS and NTU's FST.

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About Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

A research-intensive public university, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) has 33,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Engineering, Business, Science, Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences, and Graduate colleges. It also has a medical school, the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, established jointly with Imperial College London.

NTU is also home to world-renowned autonomous institutes - the National Institute of Education, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Earth Observatory of Singapore, and Singapore Centre for Environmental Life Sciences Engineering - and various leading research centres such as the Nanyang Environment & Water Research Institute (NEWRI) and Energy Research Institute @ NTU (ERI@N).

Ranked amongst the world's top universities by QS, NTU has also been named the world's top young university for the last seven years. The University's main campus is frequently listed among the Top 15 most beautiful university campuses in the world and it has 57 Green Mark-certified (equivalent to LEED-certified) building projects, of which 95% are certified Green Mark Platinum. Apart from its main campus, NTU also has a campus in Singapore's healthcare district.

Under the NTU Smart Campus vision, the University harnesses the power of digital technology and tech-enabled solutions to support better learning and living experiences, the discovery of new knowledge, and the sustainability of resources.

For more information, visit <http://www.ntu.edu.sg>

About the Singapore Food Agency (SFA)

As the lead agency for food-related matters, the Singapore Food Agency's mission is to ensure and secure a supply of safe food for Singapore. SFA works hand-in-hand with the industry and consumers to grow our three "food baskets" - Diversify import sources, Grow local, and Grow overseas, as well as ensure food safety from farm-to-fork.

SFA also partners food businesses to strengthen capabilities, tap on technologies to raise productivity, undertake research to develop new lines of business, and catalyse industry transformation to ensure food security.

For more information on SFA, visit <http://www.sfa.gov.sg>.

About the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR)

The Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) is Singapore's lead public sector R&D agency. Through open innovation, we collaborate with our partners in both the public and private sectors to benefit the economy and society. As a Science and Technology Organisation, A*STAR bridges the gap between academia and industry. Our research creates economic growth and jobs for Singapore, and enhances lives by improving societal outcomes in healthcare, urban living, and sustainability. A*STAR plays a key role in nurturing scientific talent and leaders for the wider research community and industry. A*STAR's R&D activities span biomedical sciences to physical sciences and engineering, with research entities primarily located in Biopolis and Fusionopolis. For ongoing news, visit <http://www.a-star.edu.sg>.

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This story has been published on: 2021-04-27. To contact the author, please use the contact details within the article.

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