

Title The implementation of grading, packaging and labeling (GPL) regulations to improve the development of agricultural industry

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Abstract

Malaysia is fast changing the ways to do business. Today, there is a growing concern in consumers over the quality and safety aspects of food. These consciousness sowed by better education and further propagated by easy access to information especially on food safety issues reported through the various media, exposing a number of incidents of negligence or non-compliance to GAP procedures.

In developed countries, NGO's Associations of Retailers and Governments' Regulatory Bodies work together to enforce standards on imported produce, thereby exerting control over the quality and safety of food being imported. Likewise, the GPL Regulation is also aimed at such. Embedded in GPL is the quality and safety of agricultural produce that should be marketed here which is in fact, in-lined with the Malaysian Standards (MS). The MS also conforms to international standards and guidelines of both importing and exporting countries. When fully implemented, it could also strengthen the competitiveness of our agricultural produce for exports to the global markets.

In implementing of the GPL Regulation, enforcement in stages has been recommended to facilitate trade. Labelling on properly packed imported and domestic fresh produced, should also be good for consumers. Through the mechism, labeled fresh produce along their supply chain can be traced back to their source thereby enhancing default identifications. Hence, appropriated corrective measured of food safety could be engaged. In this regard, the Ministry of Health and the Department of Agriculture for example, could trace non-compliance producer to monitor, advice and undertake remedial actions on juristrnctional pesticide usage.

The farmers and producers that adopt the GPL Regulation may gain earnings by reducing the post harvest losses currently estimated at 15% - 30% on each consignment due to usage of improper packaging. The savings on reduced post harvest losses consequently increase additional earnings to producers given that the right impetus every time post harvest losses is reduced.

The GPL Regulation promotes fair trade practices between farmers and wholesalers based upon a trading system that is benchrmarked against the Malaysian Standards. Hence, it reduces manipulations

of middlemen in determining prices through adopting a reliable grading and transparent transactions. The implementation of GPL covers local, import and export horticultural and floricultural produces. It encompasses compliances to characteristics of international trade practices especially in regard to transparency, using harmonized standards and reducing non-tariff barriers. Produce accompanied by a certificate of conformity of GPL would be preferred for trade and business.