

Asia Protein Buyers 100 finds 33% of Listed Asian Food Companies Offer Plant-Based Proteins, Yet Long Road Ahead for Sustainable Sourcing

10 June 2024, Singapore – In a promising trend towards a more sustainable food future, one in three listed Asian food companies now offer plant-based proteins. However, the latest *Asia Protein Buyers 100* report by Asia Research & Engagement (ARE) reveals that there is still a significant distance to cover in the journey towards responsible and sustainable sourcing across the region.

The assessment by ARE evaluated 100 regional protein buyers on 40 indicators across 10 sustainability themes, per the [Asia Protein Transition Platform](#) investor expected disclosures. The companies include listed manufacturers, restaurants, retailers, and hotels across more than 10 markets, with a combined market capitalisation exceeding USD563 billion. Designed as a benchmark for investors, banks, and companies striving for responsible and sustainable sourcing, ARE plans to conduct the assessment every two years.

The findings highlight a pressing urgency for responsible and sustainable sourcing among Asian food companies. “Asia’s protein buyers still need to confront the deeply problematic social and environmental impacts and dependencies along their supply chains,” said Kate Blaszak, director of Protein Transition and co-author of the report, “*The Asia Protein Buyers 100: An Assessment of Responsible and Sustainable Sourcing*.” “These direct and indirect impacts pose direct risks to the companies, their investors, lenders and customers. Forward-thinking protein buyers are tackling these risks as a market opportunity, gaining a competitive and financing edge.”

The average overall score for the 100 companies was just 9%, with no company scoring above 50%. “Such low scores might seem disheartening,” said co-author Dave Luo Jiaxuan, Protein Transition Research Manager. “But there’s now greater awareness since we published our [Baseline Benchmark](#) in 2022 and an opportunity for companies to set policies and targets by 2025.”

ARE identified the ten highest scoring companies—listed in Thailand, China, and Japan—as “Evolving Strategically,” for making it into tier three of six possible tiers. Newly assessed companies, listed in India and Vietnam, along with those listed in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines scored in the lowest tiers. Companies scored best in the assessment of public disclosure related to protein supply chains on Water & Waste (20%), and poorest on Governance (2%). Results of key themes of priority to Platform investors include:

- **Labour & Just Transition:** average score of 13%. While 23 companies have supplier codes of conduct, only two demonstrate due diligence in labour practices along their supply chains.
- **Responsible Antibiotic Use:** average score of 3%. Only one company has a policy to avoid routine preventive antibiotic use, reflecting a low recognition of the risks associated with this major use of antibiotics and resistance.
- **Animal Welfare:** average score of 7%, with only one company aligning its policy with Farm Animal Responsible Minimum Standards (FARMS) and three setting cage-free commitments.
- **Climate Change:** average score of 12%, with emerging inclusion of indirect emissions but reluctance among most companies to tackle indirect emissions in their supply chains and set science-based reduction targets.

- **Deforestation & Biodiversity:** average score of 5%. 26 companies acknowledge the risk of deforestation in their supply chains, but only two have set zero-deforestation deadlines.
- **Protein Diversification:** average score of 5%. While 33 companies offer plant-based proteins, only two have set targets to increase sales, or to help capture the potential flexitarian consumer segment.

The report urges Asia's protein buyers to enhance their efforts with integrated sustainability strategies, a focus on indirect risks and prioritisation of interdependencies, which will protect and create value for themselves, investors, and lenders. Actionable recommendations include:

- Protein buyers to develop and publish policies, targets, and commitments by 2025 that:
 - strengthen governance around protein sustainability, as part of an integrated business strategy,
 - strengthen traceability, transparency, and labour due diligence,
 - protect health and safety via clear principles on responsible antibiotic use,
 - improve animal welfare towards FARMS, starting with policies and cage-free commitments for egg and pork production.
 - commit to zero-deforestation, to protect biodiversity and help reduce emissions,
 - source seafood sustainably, growing the use of independent verification, and
 - diversify further with alternative proteins, setting a sales target to help drive uptake and scale.
- Companies can refer to the Platform to support their sustainability journey and reach out to ARE with the confidence of investor-backed engagement.
- Buyers, suppliers, investors, and financiers should collaborate, accelerating the implementation of a responsible and sustainable protein transition in Asia by 2030.

Protein buyers assessed in this report and their respective tiers are found on the next page, Page 3.

Note: The names of these companies have been abbreviated for ease of presentation. Please refer to the report for full names and company details.

Tier 1 Driving Transformation	Tier 2 Advancing Steadily	Tier 3 Evolving Strategically	Tier 4 Developing Efforts	Tier 5 Showing Awareness	Tier 6 At the Starting Blocks
0	0	10	22	24	44
		Mengniu (CH)	CafedeCoral (CH)	Dali (CH)	Anjoy (CH)
		Yili (CH)	DiaryFarm (CH)	Shangri-La (CH)	BetterLife (CH)
		Meiji (JP)	FarmMartTw (TW)	Isetan (JP)	Delisi (CH)
		NHFoods (JP)	Haidilao (CH)	MOS (JP)	Hongqi (CH)
		Nichirei (JP)	SunArt (CH)	BGFRetail (KR)	Huazhu (CH)
		Seven&iJP (JP)	Uni-Pres (TW)	Emart (KR)	Huifa (CH)
		CPAll (TH)	WHGroup (CH)	FastFood (ID)	Jiajiayue (CH)
		CPFoods (TH)	YumChina (CH)	MBA (ID)	Juewei (CH)
		Minor (TH)	Aeon (JP)	AeonMY (MY)	Langham (CH)
		ThaiUnion (TH)	Kewpie (JP)	BerjayaFood (MY)	Quanjudie (CH)
			Lawson (JP)	DutchLady (MY)	Sanjiang (CH)
			Skylark (JP)	Genting (MY)	Xlabuxiabu (CH)
			CJCheil (KR)	QLRes(MY)	Yonghui (CH)
			LotteShop (KR)	Seven&iMY (MY)	ZhouHeiYa (CH)
			LotteWell (KR)	ShengSiong (SG)	KFCJP (JP)
			F&N (SG)	Jollibee (PH)	KobeBussan (JP)
			CenturyPacific (PH)	SMFB (PH)	McdJP (JP)
			Vinamilk (VN)	MKRes (TH)	Yamazaki (JP)
			CentralPlaza (TH)	Britannia (IN)	Zensho (JP)
			Oishi (TH)	McdIN (IN)	DongwonFB (KR)
			Jubilant (IN)	MrsBector (IN)	GSRetail (KR)
			UnileverIN (IN)	NestleIN (IN)	Orion (KR)
				ParagMilk (IN)	Shilla (KR)
				Sapphire (IN)	SPCSamlip (KR)
					Amart (ID)
					Hero (ID)
					NipponIndo (ID)
					UltraJaya (ID)
					NestleMY (MY)
					QAF (SG)
					Puregold (PH)
					Robinsons (PH)
					Seven&iPH (PH)
					SMIC (PH)
					URC (PH)
					Masan (VN)
					MinhPhu (VN)
					NamVlet (VN)
					VinhHoan (VN)
					PresBake (TH)
					Devyani (IN)
					DMart (IN)
					Dodia (IN)
					RBA (IN)



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About Asia Research & Engagement (ARE)

Creating change through investor-backed engagement.

ARE's pioneering approach fills an engagement gap by bringing leading investors into dialogue with Asian-listed companies to address sustainable development challenges and help companies align with investor priorities. With decades of Asia experience, our cross-cultural team understands the region's unique needs. Our high-quality independent research, robust investor network, and engagement expertise, provide corporate leaders and financial decision makers with insights leading to concrete action.

Our work focuses on thematic priorities to promote a sustainable and compassionate Asia.

Our current programmes and goals are:

- Energy Transition: Credible transition pathways in alignment with the Paris Agreement.
- Protein Transition: Transition pathways working towards our investor-aligned 2030 vision.

Founded in 2013, ARE is headquartered in Singapore with an additional office in Beijing.

About Protein Transition Platform

ARE launched the Asia Protein Transition Platform in December 2022, in collaboration with five founding investors representing USD3 trillion in assets. The platform has set a 2030 vision and goals for protein transition in Asia, along with investor expected disclosures for companies to move towards more responsible and sustainable proteins.