

Ministry of Agriculture's Strategic Plan for Food and Nutrition Security

Structured on the four (4) internationally recognized pillars: Availability, Access, Utilization, and Stability

Preamble

As defined by the 1996 World Food Summit, food security "...exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." (WFS, 1996 para. 1).

Guyana's progress in food and nutrition security has accelerated significantly over the past decade, and the SOFI 2025 Report confirms this national achievement. Undernourishment has fallen to below 2.5 percent, and the share of citizens unable to afford a healthy diet has dropped sharply from 41.3 percent in 2017 to just 4.9 percent in 2024. These gains reflect deliberate national investments in agriculture, improved incomes, and expanded access to food across all regions.

At the same time, the report highlights an important challenge that Guyana is seeking to address and safeguard these gains. The cost of a healthy diet has risen from 4.62 PPP dollars per person per day to 6.83 PPP dollars per person per day, driven by global inflation and domestic supply pressures.

The Strategic Plan responds to this national reality, building on Guyana's strong agricultural base, including its unique capacity to produce all six major food groups. It strengthens food availability through diversified production, improves access by lowering costs and expanding markets, enhances utilization through safer and more nutritious food options, and builds long-term stability through climate-resilient infrastructure and risk management systems.

This positions Guyana to become a food-secure nation and a regional agricultural powerhouse, fully aligned with the vision to "Transform agriculture into an innovative, tech-driven sector that reduces poverty and inequality."

The Food Security and Nutrition Bill of 2024, currently in draft, will provide the legal foundation, institutional architecture, and rights-based framework required to implement the Strategic Plan across all regions of Guyana as it:

- Embeds production, supply, and agrifood system strengthening as legal obligations of the State,
- Establishes rights-based entitlements and State obligations that ensure all people, especially vulnerable groups, can access adequate food,

- Embeds nutrition, food safety, and dietary adequacy into law, and
- Establishes institutional, legal, and emergency response mechanisms that stabilize food systems over time.

Food Availability

Food availability is the foundation of Guyana's food security strategy. The Ministry's plan prioritizes expanding production, diversifying commodities, and integrating technology to increase yields and resilience across all subsectors: rice, sugar, crops, livestock, fisheries, and aquaculture.

Key Strategies

- Scale up production of key commodities and support diversification through climate-smart technology and expanded arable land.
- Mega-production systems, including farm-to-market roads, D&I expansion, and large-scale food parks.
- Rice expansion: more acreage, seed processing, fertilizer production, storage hubs, and crop insurance.
- Corn & soya self-sufficiency, fruit pulp hubs, coconut expansion, cocoa/coffee revival.
- Livestock transformation: breeding programs, forage production, abattoirs, halal/kosher systems.
- Aquaculture expansion: 500+ acres for tilapia/shrimp, cage culture, feed mill, aquaculture hubs.

Food Access

The Ministry's plan focuses on lowering production costs, expanding market infrastructure, and improving income opportunities for farmers and fisherfolk.

Key Strategies

- Establishing Guyana Shop outlets, developing permanent farmers' markets, and promote direct-to-consumer systems.
- Improved transport and logistics through upgraded ports, roads, and cold storage.
- Tax incentives and reduced tariffs to lower production and consumer costs: 0% tariff on all agriculture veterinary input and agro processing input.
- A rural credit program and youth entrepreneurship financing.

- Support for fisherfolk and cooperatives, including tax removal on outboard engines and improved landing sites with cold storage.
- Promotion of community and regional market days by bringing farmers into direct contact with community consumers.
- EWS outputs will inform targeted affordability interventions to protect vulnerable populations

Food Utilization

The Ministry's plan strengthens value addition, food safety systems, and nutrition-sensitive agriculture to support healthier diets.

Key Strategies

- Value-added food production: refined sugar, rice noodles, fortified cereals, vegan dairy, fruit pulps
- Biofortified rice commercialization (GuyLICA 17)
- Cold chain expansion to preserve nutritional quality: expand cold chain infrastructure at Parika, Port Kaituma, and Goed Fortuin
- Food safety systems: ISO-certified labs, halal/kosher certification, improved veterinary services
- Achieve self-sufficiency in hatching eggs and expand aquaculture hubs to increase protein availability.
- Develop and promote a “least-cost nutritious plate” using local foods to guide households toward affordable healthy diets.
- Strengthen food safety systems and public education (handling, storage, labeling) in collaboration with MOH and MOE.

Food Stability

Guyana's vulnerability to climate change, flooding, drought, and coastal impacts, requires robust infrastructure, risk management systems, and technological innovation. Guyana is as well exposed to imported inflation for critical foods.

Key Strategies

- Expanding drainage and irrigation networks across all regions
- Implementation of crop insurance for rice farmers
- Promote smart irrigation, rainwater harvesting, and coastal desalination

- Strengthen precision agriculture, soil testing, and nano-fertilizer use
- Enhance maritime security through an expanded Vessel Monitoring System
- Deploy the Agriculture Information System (AIS) and Farmer's App
- Upgrade Hydromet facilities for improved forecasting and early warning
- Establishing a Food Price Early Warning System to monitor and respond to inflation and market shocks

Conclusion

The Ministry of Agriculture's Strategic Plan for Food & Nutrition Security presents a comprehensive, forward-looking framework to ensure that every household in Guyana can access safe, nutritious, and affordable food. By strengthening availability, access, utilization, and stability. It positions Guyana to become a regional agricultural powerhouse and a model for sustainable, inclusive food systems.

The high cost of a healthy diet is driven by structural challenges across the food system. The Government is addressing these through a comprehensive set of interventions that lower production costs, improve logistics, expand storage, strengthen climate resilience, and increase competition.

These measures, implemented under the Ministry of Agriculture, are expected to:

- Reduce the cost of nutritious foods
- Improve affordability for households
- Strengthen national food and nutrition security
- Support Guyana's emergence as a regional agricultural leader