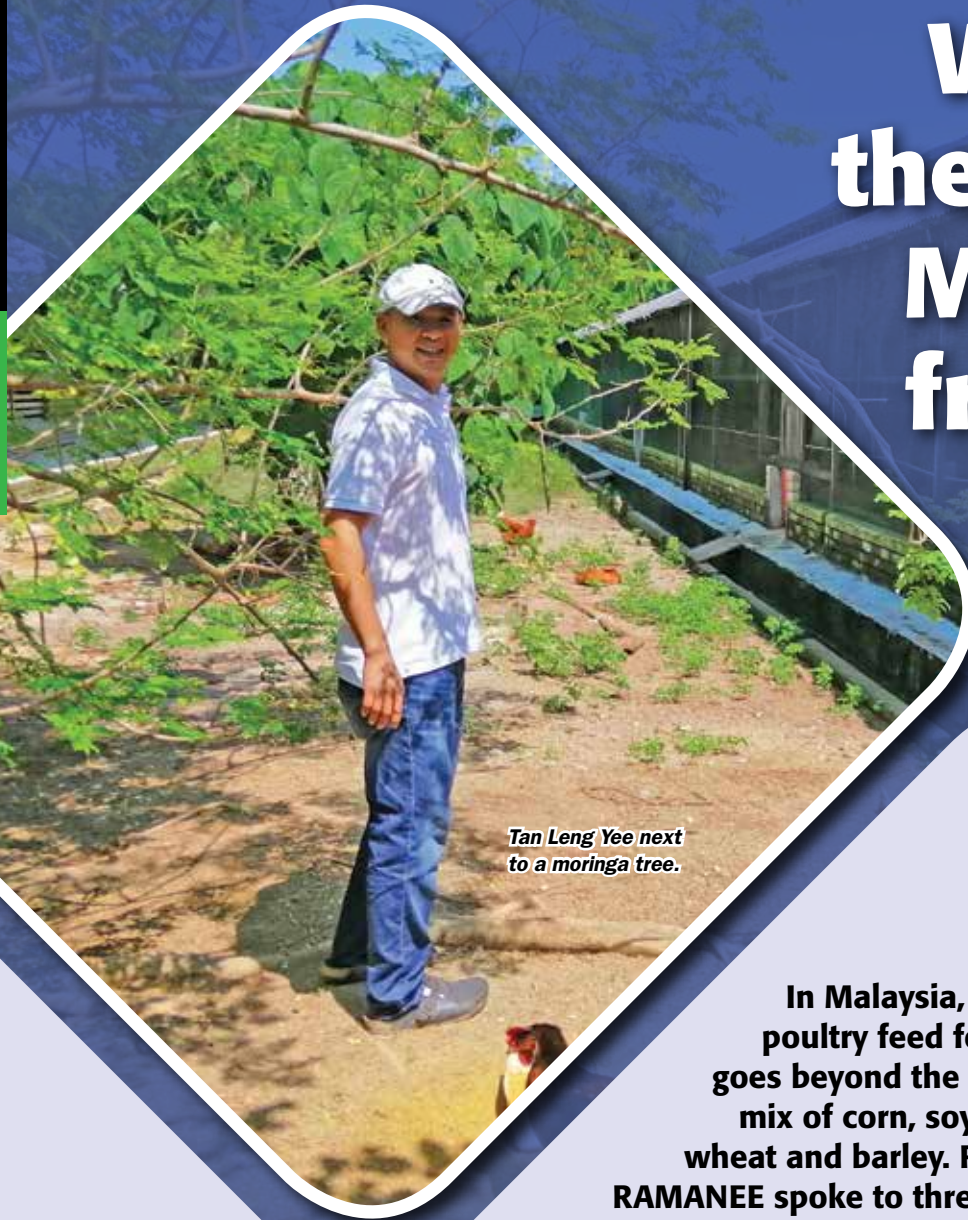


What's on the menu at Malaysia's free-range poultry farms



Tan Leng Yee next to a moringa tree.

In Malaysia, free-range poultry feed formulation goes beyond the usual base mix of corn, soybean, rice, wheat and barley. RAJESWARI RAMANEE spoke to three different producers, finding that their birds are given herbs, fruit extracts and other traditional ingredients.



At Liang Kee Farming in Perak, birds are fed a mix of corn, rice and soy mixed at the farm's own mill, and allowed to feast on local fruit and herbs.

The feed formulation is enhanced with tocotrienols, known as "super vitamin E", and carotenes.

"These actually lower the cholesterol content of the eggs while giving the yolk an orange color," said Liang Kee's Managing Director, Tan Leng Yee.

"The tocotrienols are derived from palm oil. As far as I know we are the only farm feeding our hens with it."

The farm also tops up the feed with fresh-cut lemongrass as a probiotic supplement.

"Lemongrass is known for its antimicrobial properties while grass supplies carotenes," Mr Tan added.

Liang Kee was recently issued a "certified humane" stamp by Humane Farm Animal Care (HFAC), a US-based non-profit certifier for animals raised according to its care standards. The farm's free-range layers are the only birds in Malaysia with this status.

HFAC's guidelines stipulate large areas for grazing and guidelines for feed, which must be constantly replaced to ensure freshness. The hens also get added protein from grazing patches where they can eat fruit dropped from nearby mulberry and moringa trees.

Insects and worms also make-up