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Probe into 'chicken cartel' in final stage

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysia Competition Commission (MyCC) is in the final stages of an investigation into the alleged existence of a cartel controlling the price and production of chickens in the country.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs deputy minister Datuk Rosol Wahid said several breeders and chicken integrators were also called to assist in the probe.

"A full report is expected to be tabled this month on whether it is true or otherwise," Bernama reported him saying.

He said this after appearing as a guest in Bernama Radio's "Jendela Fikir" programme yesterday where he talked about India's ban on the export of wheat flour and if it affected the supply in Malaysia (*Larangan Eksport Tepung Gandum India Jejas Bekalan Tempatan?*).

MyCC had set up a special team in early February to investigate allegations of anti-competitive conduct, including anti-competitive agreements and/or abuse of dominant position in the market that could cause an increase in the price of goods.

Meanwhile, Rosol said the decision on the extension of the subsidy for poultry farmers scheduled to end this Sunday would be finalised by the Cabinet.

"We have some suggestions related to the matter, and the meeting today (yesterday) will decide whether to stop or continue, but with a slight improvement.

"Maybe the Cabinet has other proposals, so the decision depends on the Cabinet," he said.

MyCC lengkapkan peringkat akhir siasatan

Kuala Lumpur: Suruhanjaya Persaingan Malaysia (MyCC) kini di peringkat akhir melengkapkan siasatan berhubung dakwaan kewujudan kartel yang bertindak mengawal harga dan pengeluaran bekalan ayam di dalam negara.

Timbalan Menteri Perdagangan Dalam Negeri dan Hal Ehwal Pengguna, Datuk Rosol Wahid berkata, beberapa saksi dalam kalangan penternak dan integritas turut dipanggil untuk membantu siasatan.

"Setakat ini, MyCC sedang menyiasat keterlibatan kartel dalam (mengawal) harga ayam ini dan laporan lengkap dijangka dibentangkan dalam bulan Jun ini, sama ada betul atau tidak kita lihat berdasarkan hasil itu," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian selepas menghadiri program Jendela Fikir bertajuk Larangan Eksport Tepung Gandum India Jejas Bekalan Tempatan? terbitan Berna-

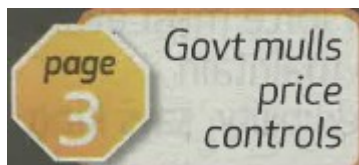
ma Radio di sini, semalam.

MyCC menubuhkan pasukan khas pada awal Februari lalu untuk menyiasat dakwaan terdapatnya pelakuan antipersaingan merangkumi perjanjian antipersaingan atau dan penyalahgunaan kedudukan dominan dalam pasaran yang boleh meningkatkan harga-harga barangan dalam pasaran industri ayam.

Sementara itu, Rosol berkata, keputusan mengenai pelanjutan subsidi RM1.40 bagi sekilogram ayam yang dijadual tamat pada Ahad ini akan dimuktamadkan oleh Kabinet.

"Kita ada beberapa cadangan berkaitan dengan hal terbabit dan hari ini (semalam) mesyuarat akan tentukan sama ada nak teruskan, nak hentikan atau yang ketiga terus tapi dengan sedikit peningkatan. Mungkin ada cadangan lain jadi keputusan bergantung kepada Kabinet," katanya.

- Bernama





The ministry has taken steps to alleviate the impact that price control measures are expected to cause. — HAFIZ SOHAIMI/THESUN

Govt mulls price controls

➤ Move considered as short-term solution to stabilise situation involving major food items

■ BY IMAN MUTTAQIN
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PETALING JAYA: A price control mechanism as a short-term remedy can be imposed to alleviate risks and secure national food security, said Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi, adding that the ministry was taking strategic steps to cushion possible impacts caused by such a move.

"This includes subsidising major food items such as poultry, cooking oil, sugar, flour and petrol and having enforcement activities on the ground to curb profiteering. The supply and demand for raw materials is the key factor in deciding price dynamics and stability."

"With the current increase in raw materials and product prices, the market is expected to stabilise within months through the government's initiatives and programmes."

Alexander said the global supply chain and market price volatility have been impacted by several factors.

"For example, the ongoing Ukraine-Russia crisis caused a rise in fuel prices, which impacted logistic costs and caused export restrictions," he said, adding that weather, disease outbreaks, sanctions on raw materials and depreciation in some major currencies were also key factors.

Consumers Association of Penang president Mohideen Abdul Kader said he supports the government's measures to control food prices, adding that the mechanism should be fair to everyone.

"No one in the supply chain should hoard products to create a rise in food prices or take advantage of the global situation to overcharge. Those caught doing so should be severely punished."

Mohideen suggested that the government help small-scale farmers to market their produce by providing links to a comprehensive marketing system, in addition to efforts to help them increase food production.

He said it was also important for the

government to set up a food safety and quality centre to ensure imported and local produce meet food safety standards.

"The government can also encourage farmers to switch to more efficient and sustainable agriculture methods to reduce their dependence on foreign labour and free their time for other work. Then, they can convert idle land to farmland, either for crops or animal feed. This will encourage farmers to produce value-added products."

Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations CEO Saravanan Thambirajah said price controls would serve as a temporary solution and the government should stabilise the market first.

"We have been depending on imports for so long that in the last three years, the government spent RM50 billion to import food items such as poultry, mutton, beef, fish and vegetables."

"We must create sustainable stocks first. Over reliance on imports can be a problem for the country as the weakening of our ringgit is quite frightening as it depends on the currency exchange."

Saravanan added that the problem with vegetable prices was also due to dependency on imports, low local production and poor weather conditions that affected yield.

Senarai Harga Barang Keperluan	
• Ayam	RM6.99
• Daging Lembu Tempatan	RM42.99
• Daging Lembu Import	RM28
• Telur Gred A	RM12.45
• Ikan Kembung	RM10
• Minyak Masak	RM6.70
• Gula Pasir	RM2.75
• Bawang Besar Holland	RM2.50
• Bawang Putih	RM5.49
• Cili Merah	RM11.99
• Kubis Tempatan	RM3.99
• Tepung Gandung	RM2.30

*Harga (RM/kg) Sumber: KPDNHEP