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Megat Junid: Cabinet approval needed for any further hike in chicken price

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TELUK INTAN, Sun. - The Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry has directed the Veterinary Services Department to ensure that any further increase in the price of chicken be referred to the Cabinet.

Its Minister, Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayub, said there should be no more increases in the price of chicken after the recent increase of 20 sen in the farm price of chicken.

He said if the department wanted to raise the price further, it would have to submit a working paper to the Cabinet to justify the increase.

Megat Junid, however, said the recent increase in the farm price of chicken from RM2.70 to RM2.90 was reasonable.

"The Ministry was recently briefed by the department that poultry breeders need at least RM2.90 to cover production costs.

"This includes chicken feed, which is imported from China and the United States," he told reporters here after the prize presentation of the Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayub challenge trophy football league championship last night.

Megat Junid said that as 90 per cent of the chicken feed was imported, poultry breeders felt that the increase would be able to cover such costs.

On why there was a need to import chicken feed when it could be produced locally, Megat Junid said imported chicken feed had a 70 per cent corn content which could not be grown here as the soil was unsuitable. He said chicken in Malaysia were fed imported chicken feed for their daily intake because of its nutrients.

"Chicken feed only contains five per cent crushed rice and the rest is corn which is imported.

"If the cost of farm chicken were to remain at RM2.50, many poultry breeders would have to close down their farms as they would not be able to cover their costs," he said, adding that the fall in the Malaysian ringgit had also contributed to the increase in price.

Megat Junid also said with the proposed increase the price of undressed chicken with legs, head and liver would be RM4.90 while dressed chicken would be RM5.20.

However, a Bernama report quoting a statement from the department said that the farm price of chicken remained at RM2.70 per kg and the nett wholesale price at RM4.10 per kg.

The statement also said that live chicken would cost 50 sen more at RM3.90 per kg while the wholesale price would be RM3.40.

In another development, Megat Junid said in view of the weaker Malaysian ringgit, consumers had been advised to buy more local goods instead of imported products.

"The Government is encouraging consumers to buy more local products such as furniture, marble and tiles."

Megat Junid also reminded consumers of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call to buy Malaysian goods.

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