

Pua now targets 1M'sia baby formula milk
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The baby formula milk sold at Kedai Rakyat 1Malaysia (KR1M) stores has contravened limits set by the Food Regulations Act 1985, according to Tony Pua, the Petaling Jaya Utara MP.

Keeping up the salvo against KR1M operator Mydin Mohamed Holdings Bhd, Pua said the '1Malaysia Growing Up Milk' contains "eight times the permitted amount of Vitamin A".

The Vitamin A content is "6012 IU (international units) per 100kcal, or 802 percent above maximum regulatory limit", he claimed, basing his comparison on the limits stipulated in the Food Regulations Act.

Pua said excessive intake of Vitamin A could result in Hypervitaminosis A, which could contribute to liver problems, reduced bone mineral density and skin discolouration, among other conditions.

Asked whether intake could lead to toxicity, Pua said: "It seems like it, but I'm no doctor. You can check with a medical practitioner."

Comparing the 1Malaysia 300gm milk formula with Nestlé Nespray 1+, he said the former lacks "key nutrients" required under regulations.

He outlined the 15 missing nutrients as essential fatty acids; Vitamin D; Vitamin C; Vitamin B1; Vitamin B2; Nicotinamide; Vitamin B6; folic acid; pantothenic acid; Vitamin B12; Vitamin K1; Vitamin H; Vitamin E; iodine and zinc.

"As for iron, it is stated here that there is only 0.1mg per 100kcal or 7.4 percent of the regulatory minimum requirement," he said.

Similarly, the calcium content in the 1Malaysia powdered milk is 4.1mg per 100kcal or 4.1 percent of the Food Regulations minimum requirement.

Moreover, he said, 300gm of the 1Malaysia formula costs more than the branded 1kg Nespray 1+ formula.

"Although there are differences in packing sizes (small packs are usually relatively more expensive), a per gram calculation of a 300g pack of KR1M milk powder versus a 1kg pack of Nespray showed a remarkable price difference of 23.8 percent - that is, Nespray 1+ is cheaper," said Pua.

He also found that the Malay and English labels on the 1Malaysia packet vary.

"The Malay version says pepejal susu rendah lemak (low-fat milk solids) but the English version says 'instant whole milk powder'. So which is it?"

Last week, Pua had charged that savings from KR1M products were exaggerated and some products even contravene the Food Act 1983 and Food Regulations 1985.

Some of the more controversial products highlighted were the 1Malaysia Oyster Sauce and the 1Malaysia

Fresh Milk.

However, Mydin yesterday trashed most of Pua's allegations on products sold at the low-end store.

Managing director Ameer Ali admitted that one complaint - on oyster sauce - was valid, but that the suppliers have been told to rectify shortcomings. In the interim, the products have been taken off the shelves.

Point-by-point rebuttal

Pua today refuted Ameer's denials point-by-point.

"A gentle reminder that it (the oyster sauce product) is not just a labelling issue, but also that of protein in the content," said Pua.

In terms of the 1Malaysia fresh milk, Pua had claimed it was contaminated with Escherichia coli (E coli) bacteria as shown by a laboratory test.

Ameer had rejected this, saying a Veterinary Department test confirmed that the milk was free from the bacterial contamination.

However, Pua said the department's test was done on a different day and the possibility of contamination could not be ignored.

"The Health Ministry must conduct tests on a regular basis on samples from the shop," he said.

Lembah Pantai MP and PKR vice-president Nurul Izzah Anwar said an "independent investigation" should be conducted to ensure that goods sold in the KR1M meet food safety regulations.

KR1M, launched in June by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, has been touted as a government effort to help Malaysians cope with rising costs of living by offering consumers basic necessities at affordable prices.

However, Pakatan Rakyat MPs have accused the KR1M scheme of selling poor quality products.

The government, on its part, has accused Pua of misleading the public.

Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob said prices of KR1M products are fixed at between 30 and 50 percent lower than their branded counterparts, but not against products sold under house brands, such as in Carrefour and other supermarkets.

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