

## **Feedlot controversy a repeat of PKFZ?**

**Malaysiakini.com**

**November 16, 2011**

**by S Pathmawathy**

Opposition lawmakers questioned today whether a minister had “cheated” the cabinet in awarding a RM250 million cattle project to the inexperienced National Feedlot Corporation (NFC).

PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar (left) said he was fearful the controversy surrounding NFC could turn out to be like the Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) fiasco which caused the government to suffer billions of ringgit in losses.

When the NFC was awarded the project in 2008, the cabinet was led by former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and the project was under the purview of then Agriculture and Agro-based Industries Minister Muhyiddin Yassin.

“Muhyiddin and Abdullah have to explain why the project was given to the NFC, when it has no experience.

The Auditor-General’s Report, which was released last month, pointed out that the cattle farm project was “in a mess”.

According to the audit report, production in 2010 was only 3,289 head of cattle or 41.1 percent of the target set.

The NFC was set up three years ago to transform the cattle and beef industry, aided by satellite farms, to meet 40 percent of local beef demand by the end of last year.

The current Agriculture and Agro-based Industries Minister, Noh Omar, had earlier said that six companies were invited to bid for the project, including international firms, but only NFC stayed on.

PAS Tumpat MP Kamaruddin Jaffar also echoed similar fears over the cabinet’s approval to award the project to NFC, which is run by the family members of Women, Family and Community Development Minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

“We don’t want billions of the rakyat’s money wasted,” he added.

‘Out with the weak ministers’

Meanwhile, commenting on PKFZ, Mahfuz insisted that ministers who were “forced to agree” to the cabinet’s decision to purchase the land for the mega-transshipment hub project should resign.

Mahfuz said that the ministers should resign from the cabinet on principle instead of nodding in approval to something they did not agree to.

“We wonder if this practice still going on up to now?” he quizzed, referring to the testimony of Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Mohd Nazri Aziz during the PKFZ trial that a majority of ministers initially disagreed with the purchase of the PKFZ land.

Nazri, who was then the Entrepreneur Development Minister, said that some ministers felt that something was wrong with the project.

“At the meeting, when the matter (PKFZ project) came up, many said that the project might not succeed. At that time, we did not want to interfere because the land price was high. RM1 billion was a huge amount then (in 2002).

"Many knew the land was sold for RM25 per sq foot (psf), whoever sells will make huge profit," he said during the trial of former transport minister Ling Liong Sik, who is charged with cheating the Malaysian government.

Mahfuz urged Nazri to explain what was it that the minister feared would be the consequence of disagreeing and present the minutes of the cabinet meeting to reveal if the ministers who disagreed in the past still hold ministerial portfolios.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd  
<http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/181508>