

## **Najib, why not cattle project for Felda subsidiary?**

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**Kuek Ser Kuang Keng**

PKR today called Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, who has been seen as silent on the National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) scandal, to explain why he did not choose a Felda subsidiary that had also bid for the cattle breeding project.

Instead Najib picked the company owned by Women, Family and Community Development Minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil's family, which has no experience in the industry, to undertake the mega project.

It is hypocritical of the premier to trumpet his contributions to Felda settlers and not give the project, worth more than RM300 million and which can benefit the settlers, to a company owned by Felda, the opposition party added.

Citing the answer of Agriculture and Agro-based Industries Minister Noh Omar, in Parliament on Oct 31, 2011, PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli (left in photo) pointed out that Najib, who was deputy prime minister then, chaired the National Feedlot Project Anchor Company Selection Committee in 2006.

The committee invited six companies, including Felda Farm Products Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Felda Plantations Sdn Bhd, and Agrosience Industries Sdn Bhd to submit their biddings for the mega project.

Eventually, the committee shortlisted Agrosience Industries and Lamberts Agriculture Trade (M) Sdn Bhd, but Lamberts withdrew, making Agrosience Industries the sole company to execute the project.

Comparing the profiles of all six companies, based on documents obtained from company searches, Rafizi, a corporate executive before venturing into politics, concluded that Felda Farm Products was the best company for the project.

The company was established in 1995 with a paid-up capital of RM10 million and RM9.6 million as revenue as of Dec 31, 2010, while Agrosience Industries was only formed a year before the contract was awarded, and had no experience in cattle farming.

"It does not take a genius to figure out which should be the best company to take over the project," said Rafizi.

"Najib cannot wash his hands and keep quiet like what he has done in the last six months.

"He is like (former prime minister) Pak Lah now. He is quieter than Pak Lah... He has his signature on the project.

"If he doesn't respond, we'll bring something on him," warned Rafizi, adding that the premier "is not a gentleman".

"I don't want to use the word coward. But the only word to describe Najib for leaving Shahrizat alone to fend off the issue so far, is not gentleman."

Natural choice among six companies

Asked about the RM22 million loss suffered by Felda Farm Products as shown in the financial documents, Rafizi, who is also the chief executive officer of the Selangor Economic Adviser's Office, argued that the major criteria to evaluate the size and operations of a company is its revenue.

He said the loss may not reflect the company's performance unless more details were available.

"Felda may not be the best company, that's why the government should call for an open tender.

"If I was Najib, my natural choice among these six companies would be Felda Farm Products because the other five were just formed yesterday," he stressed.

Furthermore, Rafizi elaborated, Felda possesses huge land and its settlers can be readily trained to farm cattle.

"Najib is responsible for granting the project to Shahrizat's family. If he had given it to Felda, we would not have the mess now," he added.

Hence PKR demanded the premier to publish all minutes of the selection committee meetings and explain: Why he sidelined Felda Farm Products in awarding the project; and what was the criteria used by him to award the project?

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