

**PAC to haul up NFC tomorrow**  
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**By S Pathmawathy**

The National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) will be hauled up before the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) tomorrow, as the parliamentary panel continues to probe the multi million ringgit scandal.

"We are guided by certain (rules). There are things that are sub judice, but this is not the first time we have touched on things that are pending in court," said PAC chairperson Azmi Khalid.

NONE "Yes (there are a lot of limitations), that's why we delayed. (But) certain things we, in Parliament, need to know, have nothing to do with the court case," he asserted.

PAC deputy chair Tan Seng Giaw (left) brushed off the limitation on the questioning powers of the PAC, saying: "There is no such thing as we cannot look into this, look at PKFZ (Port Klang Free Zone), it is a hundred time bigger than this but we still called the relevant people, some of whom are being charged."

In its four-hour meeting today, the parliamentary committee heard statements from representatives of the Agriculture and Agro-based Industries Ministry and the Finance Ministry.

NONE "There are some information that is still required. They will be providing it tomorrow," said Azmi (right), adding that the PAC has instructed the officials to obtain certified true copies from the police and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

NFC's operations had attracted negative comments in the 2010 Auditor-General's Report, which highlighted weakness in the National Feedlot Centre, a federally funded project to reduce the country's beef imports by 40 percent.

Among the accusations made by the opposition were that a huge chunk of the RM250 million government soft loan had been abused to benefit Women, Family and Community Development Minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil and her family members.

NFC chairperson Mohamad Salleh Ismail, who is Shahrizat's husband, was charged at the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court with two counts of criminal breach of trust and another two counts of violating the Companies Act 1965 last week over the purported abuses.

In November last year, PAC had interviewed several Agriculture and Agro-based Industries Ministry officers on the weaknesses in the multi-million ringgit cattle farming project.

Azmi had then complained then that the government loan was given to the company even before the agreement was signed in 2010. This was however countered by NFC insisting that the agreement was signed on Dec 6, 2007.

Cattle project on hold since 2009

He added today that the project, which was approved in the 9th Malaysia Plan in 2006 as a high-impact project, was put on hold following a directive from the Finance Ministry in 2009 to study the sustainability of the initiative.

azlan "What we heard is, it is on hold (but for how long) we don't know. A total restudy directive was given in 2009, but in between there were commitments made, once orders were made they cannot withdraw,"

said Azmi.

He explained that agreements made for the purchase of livestock prior to the pause had to be fulfilled, stressing however that NFC adhered to the directives.

“The RM250 million grant went out earlier, disbursed before the decision was made. RM181 million went to a special loan account, but the balance is still there, it went into an operations account,” he added.

NFC was to start paying back the RM250 million loan in January, but the PAC chief said that the company has yet to settle its dues.

“The first instalment (repayment) was supposed to be in January this year,” Azmi said, but Kota Belud Umno MP Abdul Rahman Dahlan interrupted, saying the dues were not paid as a result of the “extraordinary circumstances”.

Meanwhile, in a press statement late today, NFC said that the company had sought a deferment of loan repayment on Oct 27, 2009 as the export quality abattoir and other infrastructure are still not ready.

It said that the delay had affected its ability to meet its beef targets.

It added that it also could not use the soft loan to build the abattoir and other infrastructure as the government had allocated a separate fund to the Veterinary Services Department for the abattoir and other infrastructure.

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