

Ministry probing 'porcine DNA' report leak
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The Health Ministry is conducting an internal investigation on who leaked the preliminary report of porcine DNA in Cadbury chocolates, said Deputy Minister Hilmi Yahaya.

He alleged that a health officer had jumped the gun and leaked the report through social networking site Instagram before further investigation could be done to confirm the matter.

The investigations would take several weeks, he said.

"The initial test which was completed in February has found some (porcine DNA) element there. What should have done was conducted a second test on the same sample as soon as possible.

"But apparently, it was not done and they kept the result for so long, three months is too long, then after that (it) came out in social media, which we never sanctioned," he said.

He stressed that it is not about conflicting test results on the same produce, but rather an officer who jumped the gun.

He was also asked if Health Ministry director-general Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah was aware of that it was a preliminary finding before he made the announcement on the porcine DNA.

To this, Hilmi merely said that the ministry will probe the issue from all angles.

Hilmi also side-stepped questions on whether the ministry can still proceed with checks to clear the Cadbury bars of pig elements.

He said that the ministry is not sure as the confectionary-maker has retracted the batch of chocolate.

The ministry had met Cadbury, and the latter understood it "predicament", he said.

Hilmi also dismissed any element of sabotage.

'Public should trust Jakim'

When grilled by the media at a health conference in Subang Jaya, Hilmi confirmed that the Islamic Development Department (Jakim)'s investigation should be used as a reference.

"The public should trust Jakim's report," he said.

He added that both parties have agreed that in future, Jakim should be referred to for any concerns over halal and the Health Ministry will provide assistance.

Hilmi said the ministry's laboratory is capable of conducting such tests but it is not accredited to check on halal status.

He also agreed that the samples tested earlier may have contaminated but said that he, too, is puzzled over how this can happen.

Yesterday, Jakim classified Cadbury chocolates as being halal.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department in charge of Islamic issues Jamil Khir Baharom said that contamination could happen if someone who consumed pork sneezed near the sample or if the samples shared the same storage area as pork products.

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