

Mat Sabu: M'sia to import eggs for now to resolve supply shortage

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Malaysia will import chicken eggs as a short-term measure to resolve supply shortage in the country, said Agriculture and Food Security Minister Mohamad Sabu.

Several foreign sources have been identified by the ministry to meet the nation's supply needs, he added, in a statement today.

"We are aware that chicken eggs are the most popular protein source among Malaysians, with an average consumption rate of 968 million eggs per month.

"As such, the ministry is working on various approaches to ensure chicken eggs supply in the country becomes stable again at a competitive price," Mohamad said.

He also expressed confidence that the egg shortage issue can be resolved in the near future.

Mohamad assured the industry players that the government will review the measure once the egg supply has stabilised.

"The initiative to bring in chicken eggs from other foreign sources is not to pressure the local chicken egg industry operators, but rather to ensure that the supply of chicken eggs in the country is not interrupted and the welfare of the people is maintained," he added.

Mohamad said the ministry's secretary-general has been entrusted to look into the impact of importing eggs on local industry players.

"In the meantime, Agrobank will submit a proposal to assist the suppliers and small entrepreneurs so that they remain competitive in this industry," he stated.

Shortage in the past three months

After chairing a special cabinet yesterday, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said that Mohamad would announce the measures to lower the price of eggs, and ensure sufficient supply by removing the reliance on "cartels".

The shortage of eggs continues to plague consumers in markets across the country in the past three months.

This prompted some sellers to impose limitations on how many eggs a customer can buy, in addition to higher prices.

On Oct 25, the then Task Force on Jihad Against Inflation rejected recommendations, among others to import eggs as a measure to address the shortage.

Annur Musa, who was the task force chairperson, said the government did not view the import option as a solution as the prices of imported eggs were far higher.

"So it is not possible to import more expensive eggs and sell cheap in the country. Furthermore, we want to protect the local production industry," he was quoted as saying by Bernama.

Annur also revealed then that the country was facing a shortage of more than 96 million eggs a month.

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