

PKR says NFC stole cattle farm idea
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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 30 — PKR claimed today the idea for a national cattle farming project was “stolen” by Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil’s family from “young Bumiputera entrepreneurs” who spent RM300,000 to develop their business plan.

Secretary general Saifuddin Nasution said the company, which he refused to name, had first proposed the project in 2003 and received “positive feedback” from government agencies.

“But the company was not even invited to participate in the tender process. They were not even asking for funds, just to lease land in Gemas,” he said, referring to the area which the RM250 million National Feedlot Centre (NFC) project awarded to Shahrizat’s family is located.

“The idea was stolen, and worse, the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) used public funds,” the Machang MP told reporters.

The NFC project was awarded to a company headed by Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail, Shahrizat’s husband, in 2006.

The National Feedlot Centre in Gemas, Negri Sembilan. — file pic
Saifuddin showed documents between the company — with its name blacked out — and government agencies, stating it was close to signing a memorandum of understanding with the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI).

He said the company had sought advice on artificial insemination from Professor Jerry J Reeves, a farming technology expert from Washington State University and found it would be cheaper and easier than importing cattle to be fattened at the NFC.

PKR has repeatedly attacked the project with various allegations including that “loans” of over RM84 million were given by the NFC to companies owned by Shahrizat’s family including RM13.8 million for two luxury condominiums in Bangsar.

It added today that RM5 million had been spent on the purchase of a Mercedes-Benz, land in Putrajaya and disbursement of RM588,585 in cash to companies belonging to the Wanita Umno chief’s family as well as over RM455,000 issued to tour agency Impian Global Network Services.

Both opposition and Umno MPs have called for Shahrizat to resign over the scandal which has led to a police investigation for criminal breach of trust.

But the women, family and community development minister denied any wrongdoing this morning and gained the support of delegates at the wing’s general assembly today.

The Auditor-General’s Report released last month had criticised the NFC, pointing out that it was now “in a mess”.

The report said production in 2010 was only 3,289 head of cattle or 41.1 per cent of the

target set.

But Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Noh Omar responded on October 31 that the project was a success as it had met its target of 8,000 cattle by 2010 once 5,742 slaughtered cattle were taken into account.

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