

NFC beat target, says Shahrizat's husband
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GEMAS, Nov 17 — The controversial national cattle farming project went beyond its set target, chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mohamad Salleh Ismail said today, disputing a federal audit describing the scheme as being "in a mess".

"In fact, [National Feedlot Corporation (NFC)] has raised 8,016 head of cattle in 2010, surpassing its target of 8,000 head of cattle. We are importing cattle from Australia and we have to feed them for between four and six months.

"We do not slaughter them soon after arrival," Mohamad Salleh, husband to Cabinet Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Jalil, was reported saying in a Bernama Online report today.

Today was the first time Mohamad had spoken up on the brewing scandal that began after the RM250 million federally-funded project made it into the pages of the Auditor-General's Report for 2010.

The report released last month had criticised the NFC, pointing out that it was now "in a mess". It further said production in 2010 was only 3,289 head of cattle or 41.1 per cent of the target set.

Mohamad's figures today echoed Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Noh Omar's interpretation of the project's objectives

Noh previously informed the Auditor-General "the total number of cattle brought into the farm was 8,016 between 2008 and 2010."

"Of that total, 5,742 were slaughtered up to November 2010. Therefore, the target of 8,000 cattle by 2010 was met. It (the NFC project) is a success," Noh told Parliament on October 31.

The project operated by Mohamad and his two children ran into further controversy when PKR revealed that RM9.8 million from government loans to the corporation was used to buy a luxury condominium unit in Bangsar.

During a press conference today, Shahrizat's husband disputed PKR's numbers and said the project had purchased not one but two units of the condominium, adding that these had cost over RM6 million each.

Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin earlier defended the condominium purchase as an investment when the project found itself with excess liquidity after the government ran out of funds to develop satellite cattle farms.

Mohamad today called the decision to purchase the two condo units "a good business decision" that reportedly yielded a claimed RM900,000 in rental and developer rebates during the first year.

Despite clamour for the project to be investigated for irregularities, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has passed the case to the police by saying the matter should be probed under the Penal Code.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Ismail Omar today said, however, that he has yet to receive anything on the matter from the MACC.

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