

**Cattle condo: At discretion of the public, says DPM**  
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**By Lisa J. Ariffin**

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 18 — Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today that it was up to the public whether they wanted to accept the explanation given for the National Feedlot Corporation's (NFC) 'cattle condo' scandal.

The NFC is being investigated for cheating or criminal breach of trust over its purchase of two luxury condominium units here using government funds,

"We will leave that to the people to decide whether to accept the NFC's explanation or not because the NFC has explained each issue that has surfaced," Muhyiddin told reporters at a press conference today following the launch of UNESCO Day celebrations in Malaysia here.

"For us, the government, we know the truth. We don't buy stories made up by the Opposition," he added.

Muhyiddin said the government "already knows the facts".

"The media has also been given a chance to gauge the situation there," he said, referring to the special press conference to selected mainstream media organisations at the centre in Gemas, where NFC executive chairman Datuk

Seri Dr Mohamad Salleh Ismail moved to dispute all allegations against his company.

"And an explanation has been given by the NFC executive chairman so it's up to the people to accept it," he reiterated.

When asked to comment on speculation that the police are going after the whistleblowers, Muhyiddin said he would leave investigations to the authorities.

"We'll leave it to the authorities. If there is an investigation, then it's up to them. Let those in charge deal with it, I cannot answer," he said.

A public complaint alleging corruption in the purchase of the multimillion ringgit property in Bangsar was first lodged with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) but the agency later passed the case to the Commercial Crimes Investigation Department (CCID) in Bukit Aman, saying the offence falls under the jurisdiction of the police.

The NFC, which is run by the family of Cabinet minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, first became embroiled in controversy when its operations made it into the pages of the Auditor-General's Report for 2010.

The report, released last month, had criticised the RM250 million federally-funded cattle project, 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.

Putrajaya has steadfastly defended the project since then but numerous exposés by PKR, including the controversial purchase of two units at Bangsar's luxurious One Menerung condominium, forced the company to break its silence yesterday.

According to several media reports today, Mohamad Salleh, who is Shahrizat's husband, defended the NFC's purchase of the condominium units, saying it was a sound investment, and claimed the feedlot project had surpassed its production target, disputing the federal audit's findings.

He also claimed the condominium purchase had yielded RM900,000 in rental and developer rebates in the first year alone, amounting to 12.9 per cent of returns in its investment.

If the money had been kept in fixed deposit, he said, it would have only earned the NFC 2.6 per cent to 3.25 per cent returns.

Mohamad Salleh is also mulling legal action against his accusers, namely PKR strategic director Rafizi Ramli.

Both Barisan Nasional (BN) and Opposition lawmakers have called for heads to roll over the scandal, with the latter urging Putrajaya to axe Shahrizat from the Cabinet.

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