

Pua queries NFCorp's Singapore plan
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 1 — Tony Pua asked today why the National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp) is looking to expand to Singapore when the island republic bans the import of raw beef from Malaysia.

The DAP publicity chief pointed out that Singapore's Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) only permitted processed beef such as sausages, patties, meatballs and smoked meat to be brought in.

Even then, only five companies were allowed to do so — Mac Food Sdn Bhd, Nestle Manufacturing Sdn Bhd, PAP Cashnet Sdn Bhd, Unilever Bestfoods Sdn Bhd and Lucky Food Processing Sdn Bhd.

"NFCorp has not been given any approval to export its beef or processed meat to Singapore... Is this not a clear case of putting the cart before the cows?" he said in a statement.

Pua (picture) said NFCorp must also answer claims that the RM250 million loan it was granted by Putrajaya had been used as leverage to obtain commercial bank loans used to start a supermarket venture in Singapore.

Running a supermarket was different from exporting beef, he noted, saying that the sale of beef products would do very little to increase demand for Malaysian beef in Singapore.

"If promoting beef from NFCorp is indeed the overriding objective... then Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh either completely lacks business sense or is lying through his teeth to justify use of public funds," he said.

NFCorp chairman Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail told The Malaysian Insider yesterday the company intends to sell its beef products abroad as the local market was too small to support its intended output.

Salleh explained that NFCorp was now building up the market in Singapore and will do the same in Indonesia as the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) was on target to produce 78,000 tonnes of beef by 2015.

The NFC, which is supervised by NFCorp, was set up in 2007 to provide food security and attain 40 per cent self-sufficiency for beef production by 2015.

"When we have this many tonnes of beef, the Malaysian market will not buy everything so we have to find other places to sell," Salleh said yesterday.

However, he declined to comment on his family's alleged links to Farmhouse Supermarkets in Singapore, only stating that NFCorp would issue a statement soon to "explain in the proper context".

PKR strategic director Rafizi Ramli, who has led opposition attacks against NFCorp, said today the company has no business expanding overseas if it cannot meet even production quotas for the local market.

The NFC only managed to produce 400 tonnes of beef annually in its first two years of operation, or only 0.8 per cent of the government's 50,000-tonne yearly target, he claimed.

NFCorp hit the headlines after it made it into the Auditor-General's Report last year, and has continued to hog the limelight after it was linked to federal minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Jalil.

Salleh, a former food science head at Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (UPM), is Shahrizat's husband. He runs the company with their three children.

PKR has made several claims of abuse over NFCorp's federal loan involving over RM62 million spent on land, property and other expenses unrelated to cattle raising.

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