

NFCorp says livestock not diseased
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 10 — The National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp) today denied claims that some of its cattle were diseased, maintaining that all of its products are “hygienic” and of “high quality.”

DAP lawmaker Tony Pua revealed yesterday test results showing that some of the cattle raised under the scandal-ridden National Feedlot Centre (NFC) scheme had died from copper poisoning, raising health concerns about meat from the scheme.

File photo of cattle grazing at the National Feedlot Centre in Gemas.
He said the tests by the Veterinary Services Department (VRD) were conducted on half a dozen cattle that had died at the NFC in June last year.

All the tests, he said, had indicated copper levels well above the normal range for healthy cattle, which is 25 to 100 parts per million (ppm).

But NFCorp veterinarian Dr Md Dali Baba accused Pua today of being an “irresponsible scaremonger”, saying that copper toxicity in cattle happens occasionally in the livestock business and was encountered in most parts of the world.

“Throughout 2011, only eight from its stock of cattle suffered from copper toxicity at the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) in Gemas, Negri Sembilan.

“Copper toxicity is not a disease. It is caused by higher level of copper consumption from palm kernel cakes which contain copper trace elements,” the NFCorp official said in a statement.

“NFCorp reassures members of the public that the company has in its employ a fully qualified veterinarian and two meat inspectors at its abattoir, one of whom has more than 35 years’ experience in his field, to ensure quality hygienically-prepared beef is delivered,” said the statement.

Md Dali pointed out that all NFCorp products bore the Veterinary Health Mark (VHM) issued by the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS).

“The fact that MP Tony Pua has sighted test reports issued by the DVS proves that a very high standard prevails in the way NFCorp conducts its operations,” he added.

The NFCorp statement also quoted its meat inspector and abattoir manager Mej (B) Mohamad Nor bin Mohd Isa as saying “NFCorp maintains a high level of health audit on its cattle. Dead cattle on the farm are thoroughly inspected with lab tests done to determine causes, and after a post mortem carcasses are appropriately disposed.”

He said that according to NADIS (National Animal Disease Information Service), a network of 40 veterinary practices and six veterinary colleges monitoring diseases in cattle in the

UK, cattle are commonly supplemented with copper to prevent copper deficiency.

The National Feedlot Centre and NFCorp, which runs the RM250 million federally funded cattle-farming scheme, hit headlines last year when the Auditor-General reported that it had missed production targets.

Former federal minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, whose family runs the NFCorp, has since decided not to continue on as Senator after the scandal erupted in the media. She ended her term on Sunday and relinquished her Women, Family and Community Development minister post to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Her husband and NFCorp chairman Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh Ismail is currently facing charges for criminal breach of trust and violations of the Companies Act for his involvement in the scandal-ridden project.

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