

NFC probe must begin at the top, says PAS

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KUALA LUMPUR: Investigations into the National Feedlot Centre scandal must begin at the top to include decision-makers involved in awarding the cattle-farming project, PAS vice-president Datuk Mahfuz Omar said yesterday.

Calling for a Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) into the matter, Mahfuz said the various allegations against the National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) and its management are merely the result of a questionable decision-making process.

The NFC is headed by Datuk Seri Mohd Salleh Ismail, the

husband of Women, Community and Families Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

"This includes the approval of a RM250 million soft loan to fund the project, without following procedures set out by the Finance Ministry," Mahfuz told a press conference at the PAS headquarters here.

Mahfuz said a RCI should be set up to investigate all angles of the scandal, despite an ongoing probe by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) into allegations of mismanagement and corruption in administration in the NFC.

The NFC was awarded the cattle-farming project in Gemas

by a cabinet high-impact projects committee in September 2006. The project objective is to meet 40% of the local beef demands.

The Public Accounts Committee had reportedly confirmed that funds were channelled to the corporation between 2008 and 2009, despite the official loan agreement only being signed in 2010.

Shahrizat had on Thursday applied for a three-week leave from all ministerial duties to allow for a full investigation by the MACC, following repeated calls for her resignation from various quarters.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak had on Saturday announced that the

NFC assets have been frozen, pending the outcome of the MACC probe.

Mahfuz, however, questioned whether the move to freeze the NFC assets is enough to ensure that all lost funds can be recovered.

He said the government should also freeze the assets of the NFC directors.

The PAS leader alleged that funds allocated for the project had been invested in other personal ventures.

In a statement over the weekend, NFC chief executive officer Wan Shahinur Izmir Salleh had insisted that the freeze has not impacted the company's daily operations.