

Disclose PAC minutes on NFC, says PAS VP

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KUALA LUMPUR: The minutes of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) meeting last November on the National Feedlot Centre (NFC) should be disclosed to the public, PAS vice-president Datuk Mahfuz Omar said.

Mahfuz said this could be done by sending the documents to all members of parliament, which would automatically make the minutes a public document that could be examined by all parties.

"These meeting minutes are very important as admissions were made that there was no personal guarantee in the NFC agreement," he said at PAS headquarters yesterday. In hearings last year, PAC chairman Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid said the committee interviewed several Agriculture and Agro-based

Industries Ministry officers at their Nov 23 sitting.

He said they learnt that a RM250 million soft loan for the National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp) - which was set up to manage the centre - was disbursed into an account in 2009, a year before the agreement was signed. However, NFCorp officials denied this in a statement. The PAC was supposed to call in NFCorp officials in January, but has yet to do so.

Mahfuz also hit out at what he claimed was failure by the government to monitor the cattle breeding project, which was aimed at reducing the country's beef imports.

He said there were four committees overseeing the project, including a joint steering committee chaired by the then agriculture minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, and Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan.

"These committees were supposed to be monitoring the progress of the project. They should have monitored what was being done with the money for this project."

Allegations of mismanagement in the NFC came to light in October last year with the release of the 2010 Auditor-General's Report which pointed out that the centre had failed to achieve its objectives.

Following this, opposition politicians made a series of allegations that NFCorp had misused funds earmarked for the project to buy property.

NFCorp chairman Datuk Dr Mohamad Salleh Ismail is Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil's husband, and their children are on the board of directors.

NFCorp has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing in the matter.