

Top NFCorp execs snub PAC

By REGINA LEE
regina@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Top executives of the National Feedlot Corporation (NFCorp) did not turn up at the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) hearing into the cattle-rearing controversy, cutting short the meeting.

NFCorp sent only its group administration manager – together with two lawyers – who said they would not be taking any questions on the matter at the meeting that lasted 45 minutes.

In contrast, the PAC spent four hours with representatives from the Agriculture and Agro-based Industry and the Finance ministries on Monday.

Only junior executive and lawyers turn up for hearing

NFCorp executive chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mohamad Salleh Ismail was charged last week with two counts of committing criminal breach of trust and two counts of violating the Companies Act 1965 involving RM49.7mil.

PAC chairman Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid said neither Dr Mohamad Salleh nor his son and company chief executive officer Wan Shahinur Izran or other top executives from the company turned up at the hearing yesterday.

"I think this was on the advice of the lawyers. I think they are scared

of speaking about certain things that might affect the ongoing court case," he said.

Azmi added, however, the PAC has no impact on the court case.

He said the PAC would consult the Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat – who ruled last week that Parliament would not discuss the matter – if his ruling affected the PAC.

"We also have to discuss, among ourselves first, if we are going to call NFCorp again.

"But at the moment, we're not keen on questioning a junior executive," Azmi told reporters at

Parliament House.

Azmi said the PAC was more interested in how to assist the Government and detect weaknesses in the financial management procedures.

The PAC had tried to assure the NFCorp representatives they would not be discussing the court charges, but to no avail.

Azmi said the committee had yet to decide on its next course of action.

Meanwhile, NFCorp issued a statement to say that as a result of the ongoing charges against Dr

Mohamad Salleh, the company's legal team had attended the PAC proceedings on his behalf.

The NFCorp lawyers informed the committee the executive chairman "regretfully cannot accept the invitation" to appear before the PAC in view of the pending charges as the matter is regarded sub judice.

PAC member Tony Pua charged that NFCorp was giving "stupid excuses".

"They tried to use technical excuses, like their invitation had not come from the PAC directly but from the Agriculture Ministry. What a waste of time," he said.

Asked if the PAC hearing on the NFCorp was far from over, Pua said: "I hope so."