

NATION

'China rules for bird's nest too strict'

KUCHING: Most bird's nest producers and processors in Sarawak are having difficulties in complying with China's strict export conditions, which include nests having a nitrate content of less than 30 parts per million (PPM).

The export condition is "too stringent", said Bird Nest Import and Export Association chairman Liew Thian Leong yesterday.

He said the nests "naturally" had high nitrate content and they faced difficulties in extracting it.

"We have to clean them repeatedly to get rid of the nitrate. And multiple washings usually distort the natural shape of the nests which we try to maintain to prove their authenticity," said Liew, whose association consists of more than 100 members, with the majority of them in Sibuluan and Mukah.

"The price of nests remain low as producers have built up a large stock during the ban. Before the ban, 1kg could fetch RM5,000.

"After the ban, the price dropped to RM2,000 per kg on the average. It has remained so because most farmers still have a lot of stock," he said.

China had, last July, stopped importing Malaysian bird's nests after it found samples that contained 200ppm of nitrate.

The level allowed by the World Health Organisation is 34ppm.