

Bird's nest traders laud move to reject RFID tags

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PETALING JAYA: Bird's nest traders have welcomed the Government's effort to inform China of their objection to the plan to install radio frequency identification (RFID) tags on boxes imported from Malaysia.

It is learnt that the Veterinary Services Department would inform Chinese authorities of the local

industry's objection to putting RFID tags on the boxes.

Malaysian Federation of Bird's Nests Merchants secretary Carole Loh said the federation was grateful that the Government had stepped in to help.

"It will be unsuitable to install RFID tags as the bird's nests will have to pass through many hands between the time they are harvested and when they reach the consumer.

"The integrity of the RFID tags will be compromised each time the boxes are opened, and there is also the danger of tampering," she said yesterday.

The RFID technology is used to trace the origin of the bird's nests and identify the swiftlet birdhouse producing the nests.

The federation had earlier aired its grouses over obstacles in exporting bird's nests to China.

This led to department director-general Datuk Dr Abdul Aziz Jamaluddin and Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Ministry secretary-general Datuk Mohd Hashim Abdullah to contact the Malaysian ambassador in China to inform him of the industry's objections to RFID tags.

Chinese authorities had halted bird's nest imports from Malaysia since July last year after tests revealed that they contained nitrite

levels that did not meet health standards.

Loh said certificates obtained by bird's nests traders from the department and the Health Ministry could confirm that the products were fit for consumption and contained nitrite levels of below 30ppm.

"Since China banned our bird's nests last year, the industry has lost millions of ringgit in revenue," Loh said.