

# 'Suppliers making excuses'

## HIKE IN CHICKEN

**PRICE:** Traders claim suppliers cite weather, low supply as reasons to raise prices

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**T**HE sudden hike in the price of chicken is due to irresponsible suppliers, leaving traders with no choice but to increase their prices.

The price of chicken has risen to RM10 per kg, exceeding the ceiling price set by the Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry under the Aidilfitri Price Control Scheme.

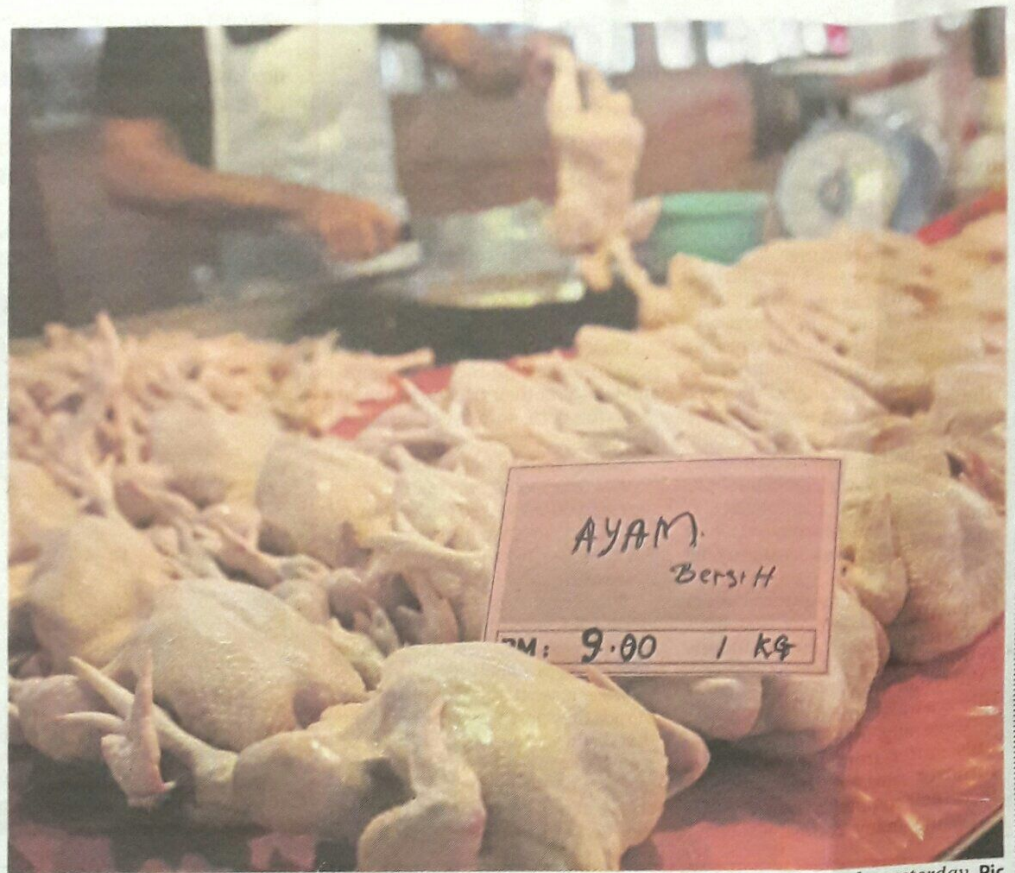
Chow Kit Market Traders Association president, who only wanted to be known as Pak Long Rashid, said suppliers constantly used the excuses of a change in the weather and insufficient supply to increase their prices.

"These excuses are not valid since the ministry has confirmed that supply was adequate for the festive season.

"As for putting the blame on the El Nino phenomenon, which allegedly caused many chickens to die, as reported by a Bahasa Malaysia daily recently, it is unrelated as the phenomenon ended three months ago," said Rashid.

"I was informed by a supplier before Hari Raya that the price will increase after Raya because of insufficient supply. This has been happening every year.

"Suppliers have increased their chicken price to RM9 per kg since the first day of Hari Raya, thus we have no choice but to sell it at



One of the stalls in Pasar Raja Bot in Chow Kit, Kuala Lumpur, offering chicken at RM9 per kg yesterday. Pic by Ghazali Kori

RM9.50 per kg," he told the *New Straits Times*.

Rashid said traders had become victims as many consumers accused them of profiteering from the situation.

"We are barely making a profit. We're only getting RM0.50 per kg, and with that money, we need to pay our employees and manage operational costs.

"Traders have always adhered to the regulations set by the ministry.

For example, for the duration of the Price Control Scheme, we sold chicken at the ceiling price even though suppliers had set the price at RM7.60 per kg," he said.

A check by NST in Jalan Raja Bot Market, Chow Kit here, yesterday showed that the price of chicken was between RM8.50 and RM9.80 per kg.

Trader Muhammad Khairul Anwar Mohd Tarmizi, 30, said the sharp price increase of 90 sen per

kg was noticed on the second day of Hari Raya.

"Last Saturday, the ministry's enforcement unit came to inspect the price and the suppliers sold the items to traders at RM7.20 to avoid getting into trouble."

Khairul said supply was sufficient for now, but by this weekend, due to the many Raya open houses, he predicted that the supply would decrease, thus leading to an increase in price.

## 6 wholesalers issued show-cause letters

**KUANTAN:** The state Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry has issued show-cause letters to six chicken wholesalers for raising prices.

Its state director, Sharuddin Jali, said the action was based on Section 21 of the Price Control and Anti-Profitteering Act.

"They need to respond with an explanation within seven days as to why they raised the price of chicken," he said yesterday.

He said wholesalers claimed that they raised the price because the cost of processing the chickens had become higher.

They also claimed that they had to spend more on processing as the

chickens were smaller in size.

"They claimed that with smaller chickens, the cost to remove the birds' feathers and entrails during processing becomes higher," Sharuddin said.

He said checks showed that there was no shortage of chicken in the market.

He added that the ministry's office here had received numerous complaints from consumers on the steep price of chickens.

The complaints, he said, included cases where consumers were charged between RM10 and RM13 per chicken at the Kuantan market and at several other premises in Balok.



State Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry director Sharuddin Jali (right) inspecting chickens at an outlet in Sungai Soi, Kuantan, yesterday. Pic by Shahrinnahhar Latib