

# Kelantan almost free from H5N1

## State can be declared virus-free if no new cases are detected in next 18 days

KUALA LUMPUR: Kelantan is close to being declared H5N1-free now that it has passed 72 days without any new cases of the bird flu.

Veterinary Services Department director-general Datuk Dr Quaza Nizamuddin Hassan Nizam said that if there were no cases after 90 days, the state can be declared free of the virus.

This was in keeping with World Health Organisation rules, he said.

"As part of our surveillance, we took 2,843 samples from 565 chicken breeders and there was no sign of the virus," said Dr Quaza.

He said some 56,963 chickens were culled and 17,531 eggs destroyed in the state during the outbreak.

"We continue to maintain roadblocks at our border crossings in Kelantan to ensure that no poultry enters or leaves," Dr Quaza said at a press conference after distributing *tabur lambuk* to his staff.

He said the 1,023 farmers who lost their poultry due to the culling operations will receive compensation before the Hari Raya celebrations. The compensation amounted to

RM413,004 and the farmers will be reimbursed according to the number of livestock they lost.

Dr Quaza said China and Japan have imposed a temporary ban on the import of poultry from Malaysia so a virus-free declaration was vital for the country.

On the outbreak of hemorrhagic septicaemia in Terengganu, he said about 273 cows in the state died from the disease, which was usually triggered by odd changes in weather.

"The disease is caused by the bacteria *Pasteurella multocida* which exists in cattle. It is usually harmless but stress caused by the weather changes, for example, can trigger the disease.

"The disease can be cured through vaccination and we have immunised 1,688 animals so far and are targeting 3,000 in total. There have been no reports of any more cases over the past three days," he said.

On another matter, Dr Quaza gave his assurance that there was sufficient supplies of beef and chicken nationwide for the Hari Raya celebrations.