

PRIME NEWS

'Hot weather stressing out our chickens'

SUPPLY HIT: Their growth hampered, egg production down by 10 per cent, says minister

KUALA LUMPUR

IF you think you're stressed out by the searing hot weather, spare a thought then for the chickens.

According to Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek, it is not only humans who were feeling the effects of the El Nino weather phenomenon, Bernama reported.

Chickens, he said, were under "stress", directly hampering their growth process.

"This can happen as some poultry farmers still use outdated concepts such as open coops. When temperatures soar, the chickens' stress level can increase.

"For example, it can take them 40 days instead of 38 days to attain a certain weight," he said during a question-and-answer session in the Dewan Negara yesterday.

Shabery was responding to a question from Senator Engku Naimah Engku Taib who asked



whether the hot weather would affect the supply of chicken and beef, especially with the coming month of Ramadan.

He said the hot weather would lead to a five to 10 per cent reduction in chicken egg production.

"We are worried that the *rakyat* will become distressed when the supply of chicken goes down."

To solve the problem, he said poultry farmers must adopt new techniques, such as temperature-controlled closed coops.

"For the fasting month, we have the made necessary preparations. If the supply is not sufficient, the ministry is prepared to import chickens to ensure that the prices are stable."

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Wilfred Madius Tangau was reported as saying that the El Nino weather phenomenon would end in June.