

Wholesalers get the blame as chicken prices hit all-time high

GEORGE TOWN: Prices of chicken here have gone up by RM1 with traders blaming wholesalers for the increase.

Wholesalers in turn are saying that the increase was inevitable due to a hike in the price of chicken feed.

Trader Rames Karmagam said suppliers had been increasing their prices over the past few weeks.

"Prices went up from RM8 to RM9

over the week. This is the highest as wholesalers are charging us RM7.50 per kilo," said Rames, who sells the birds at the Bandar Baru market in Air Itam.

He said prices could go up to RM10 a kilo as wholesalers had indicated that cost of chicken feed could rise further.

"Things are getting more expensive and I can't really blame the

wholesalers solely," said Rames, adding that his supplier delivered about 600 chickens on weekdays and 800 on weekends.

"My daily expenditure is about RM500, including wages for 10 workers and other expenses such as utilities and rental."

Another trader Bharat Ali, 55, was sceptical whether the festive price control mechanism could

push down the price of chicken to an "acceptable" level this year.

"It was fixed at RM7.50 last year after the price control came into effect but I doubt if the same price can be maintained," said Bharat.

State Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry deputy enforcement chief (I) Chin Ching Chung said they had sent officers to check on several sup-

pliers in Kepala Batas and Bukit Minyak after traders blamed them for the price increase.

"We issued a notice to a supplier in Kepala Batas and he has to give us a written explanation by next week on the price hike," he said.

Chin added that the department was also checking on claims of a price increase in chicken feed, causing a spiral effect in the market.