

JABATAN PERKHIDMATAN VETERINAR MALAYSIA

LAPORAN LIPUTAN MEDIA

Sabtu, 16 Julai 2022

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Photo: AZHAR MAHFUD/The Star

'Don't kill the goose that lays eggs'

Poultry farmers are losing money with each egg they produce, and with 40% of farms across the country already shuttered, Malaysia could soon be facing an acute shortage. Farmers say more of them will close down and are hoping the government can either float the price of eggs or increase their subsidies to save them.

> See reports on page 4 by ALLISON LAI

Eggs may cost more as poultry farms cut output

KUALA LUMPUR: The cheapest source of protein may cost more as a shortage is looming after poultry farms slash production due to increasing costs, limited subsidies and a ceiling price to adhere to.

Egg-consuming individuals, families and businesses may need to fork out more for the nutrition powerhouse if no measure is taken to assist the farmers.

Malaysian Bakery, Biscuit, Confectionery, Mee and Kuay Teow Merchants Association president Lai Yee Kein said that in the case of a price change in eggs, businesses

that use them, such as bakeries and eateries, would be affected the most.

"The situation will depend on the usage volume and consumption. Although one can always eat fewer eggs, it will eventually trickle down to the normal consumers like you and me," he said yesterday.

According to Lai, a ceiling price system to control the prices of eggs will result in farmers producing fewer eggs to cut losses when costs go up, leading to a shortage.

"It is illogical not to let farmers adjust prices while the cost of raw

materials has skyrocketed.

"The government should make the right decision because this concerns the country's economy," he said.

He added that a prolonged shortage could make things worse for farmers and consumers.

He said consumers should also understand the reasoning behind the price increase and not blame it on the farmers or businesses.

"Malaysia produces more than enough chicken and eggs for its citizens' consumption, and we even export them.

"However, the pandemic and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict have brought about many problems, causing the price of chicken feed to go up.

"This is not something we can control," he said, adding that the onus was on the government to keep the impact minimal.

With Malaysia's poultry and egg industry being self-sufficient, Lai said the government should do more to assist farmers in times of need, especially when the country's food security demands more attention.

"It is always better to be strong on our own without relying on outsiders. Our poultry industry should be prioritised and protected," he added.

"All types of farmers should be taken care of along with the needs of the people according to the current economic development.

"Many used to think we can import when our food supply is low and take things for granted. Look at us now.

"Where are we heading amid this ongoing war in Ukraine and global inflation?" he said.

Fewer eggs with farms being closed

Rising costs forcing farmers to scale back or fold entirely

By ALLISON LAI
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KUALA LUMPUR: An egg shortage in the country could worsen soon, with farmers saying they are losing money in producing food staples.

The closure of about 40% of poultry farms — which have fallen from over 300 to just 170 — is not helping.

Those still operating say they need better subsidies to keep prices low, especially with the doubling of chicken feed prices.

Many of them say they are also on the brink of folding. The farmers say they lose 5 sen per egg despite the government subsidy of 5 sen each.

Federation of Livestock Farmers Associations of Malaysia deputy president Lee Yoon Yau said the war in Ukraine had pushed maize and soybean meal prices up by another 50% between April and June.

"Maize and soybean meal make up over 80% of chicken feed.

"Since the pandemic two years ago, farmers have been struggling

due to the increasing feed cost.

"Maize used to cost RM800 per tonne before the pandemic. During Covid-19, it went up to RM1,300 per tonne.

"Now, it's more than RM1,800 per tonne," he said yesterday.

Soybean meal, he added, now costs over RM2,650 per tonne, up from RM1,650 in January 2020.

Lee said although the government had set the ceiling price at 35 sen per egg (Grade C) from Feb 5 to June 30, the cost of production had risen to 45 sen per egg.

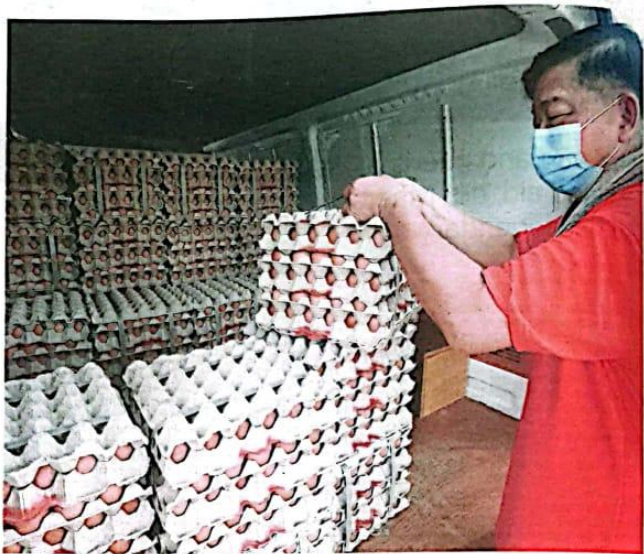
"So, with a 5 sen per egg subsidy, we lose 5 sen.

"With the current daily production of 28 million tonnes, the loss is RM1.04mil daily and RM42mil monthly for farmers," he said.

For July and August, the government has announced an increase of 2 sen in ceiling price per egg, with nothing said about the subsidy.

Lee, the federation's poultry layer unit chairman, said the federation wanted a subsidy of 8 sen per egg to be able to sell at cost price.

"We are not talking about profits,



Eggs-tra careful: A man arranging eggs for delivery in Puchong, Selangor. — AZHAR MAHFUF/The Star

but only to break even so we can pay our suppliers and workers," he said.

Lee said that many small farmers had shut down for good, while the bigger farms had scaled down production, mainly because they could not operate at a loss.

"Also, the increase in the minimum wage from RM1,200 to RM1,500 in May, and other cost increases, have made things worse for farmers," he said.

He warned that a shortage of eggs would occur if farmers were forced to continue selling at a loss.

"If the government is not keen to provide a reasonable subsidy, it should allow prices to be floated and let market forces decide.

"The farmers are now holding on to their last breath in the intensive care unit. The poultry industry could collapse soon," he said.

Lee noted that floating the prices was not new in Malaysia because,

in the past, egg prices were only controlled during festive seasons.

On the egg shortage in Sabah, federation committee member Chia Seong Pow said more shortages were expected as farmers slash production due to the high costs.

"If the business environment is not conducive, farmers will certainly cut down production.

"We cannot just halt production because the chicks and chickens are still there," he said.

Sepang

KEMASUKAN AYAM BULAT IMPORT

MENINGKAT
80 PERATUS

Kemasukan ayam bulat import meningkat 80 peratus pada Jun kepada 471 tan metrik berbanding 258 dalam bulan Mei berikutan peminangan Lesen Import (AP) dan penangguhan fi permit yang bermula bulan lepas.

Menteri Pertanian dan Industri Makanan Datuk Seri Dr Ronald Kiandee (*gambar*) berkata kemasukan keratan ayam juga meningkat sebanyak 30 peratus bulan lepas kepada 10,200 tan metrik daripada 7,800 pada Mei.

Beliau berkata prosedur pengimportan bahan makanan yang dipermudah oleh Jabatan Perkhidmatan Kuarantin dan Pemeriksaan Malaysia (Maqis) telah mempercepat proses kemasukan ayam bulat.

"Bekalan ayam di negara kita sudah stabil," katanya kepada media selepas meninjau operasi pengimportan serta pengeksportan produk pertanian dan haiwan di Kompleks Kargo Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Kuala Lumpur (KLIA).

Pada Mei lepas, Perdana Menteri Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob mengumumkan pemberhentian eksport ayam sebanyak 3.6 juta ekor sebulan bermula 1 Jun selain pelaksanaan pemansuhan AP ayam termasuk bagi ayam bulat dan keratan ayam.

Susulan peminangan itu, sesi-

apa sahaja boleh mengimport makanan ke negara ini bagi memastikan bekalan mencukupi.

Pada 21 Jun lepas, kerajaan turut mengumumkan penangguhan kutipan fi permit bagi komoditi jagung, soya, gandum, ayam bulat dan komoditi asas makanan ternakan.

Penangguhan itu bagi memastikan sekuriti makanan dalam negara terjamin berikutan kos bahan mentah makanan ternakan yang tinggi dalam industri

dikenal pasti sebagai antara faktor kenaikan harga barangan seperti ayam.

Ditanya sama ada harga si-

ling ayam yang kini ditetapkan RM9.40 sekilogram di Semenanjung boleh diturunkan susulan bekalan yang sudah stabil, Ronald berkata ia bergantung kepada kuasa pasaran seperti kos input makanan ternakan yang kebanyakannya diimport dan tukaran mata wang asing.

"Kos input bagi pengeluaran ternakan, penanaman sayur dan banyak produk makanan yang dibuat di Malaysia sebahagian besarnya bergantung

pada harga pasaran antarabangsa seperti baja dan racun.

"Ayam dan ruminan pula 70 peratus kos pengeluaran bergantung kepada kos

input bijirin termasuk jagung dan soya yang diimport dari negara luar.

"Kita ternak ayam tapi kita tak tanam jagung dan soya yang menjadi keperluan kepada makanan ternakan haiwan. Jadi semua ini bergantung kepada pasaran antarabangsa," katanya.

Ronald berkata kerajaan melalui Maqis juga telah melaksanakan beberapa inisiatif bagi memudah cara prosedur pengimportan bahan makanan ke Malaysia antaranya proses kemasukan pantas 24 jam di pintu masuk negara sekaligus mengurangkan kos logistik yang terlibat dalam aktiviti pengimportan.

Beliau berkata inisiatif itu membantu 380 syarikat yang berdaftar sebagai pengimport produk makanan haiwan bagi melancarkan proses pengimportan.

"Sehingga kini, sejumlah 490 konsainan bijirin dan makanan haiwan dengan kuantiti sebanyak 173,000 tan metrik bernilai RM483 juta telah mendapat manfaat daripada proses kemasukan pantas di pintu masuk negara," katanya.

