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KPDNHEP tracks down illegal meat cartel ensures meat in market safe

The Malaysian Reserve, Malaysia

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by AFIQ AZIZ

THE government has identified the supply chain of suspected cartels in the smuggling and distributing of non-certified meat into the country.

The Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP) has conducted nearly 30 inspections at the wholesale level and 130 retailers, and contained the products reaching end-consumers.

A total of 1,500 tonnes of frozen meat with an estimated value of RM30 million were seized during one of the inspections at the wholesale and retailer level in conjunction with the Christmas Maximum Price Scheme at a supermarket yesterday. The minister assures the public not to worry as it is monitoring this issue closely with aggressive enforcement.

However, KPDNHEP Deputy Minister Datuk Rosol Wahid has been advised by the deputy public prosecutor to keep mum on the details, as the case will be heard in court soon.

He was responding to a series of news reports since early this month about a syndicate, which had been bribing government officers for decades to bring in uncertified meat.

This has caused panic among the public, whose concerns were of whether meat products in the market are safe.

“Do not worry about this issue. We guarantee you that we are monitoring this closely with aggressive enforcement. So far, we have done 29 inspections at wholesale premises and 130 retailers. We are working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, the Customs Department and the traders themselves. We have traced them and know who was involved. We will reveal all the information on the smuggling process to the traders themselves,” said Rosol, however, said this revelation was exaggerated.

“Do not worry about this issue. We guarantee you that we are monitoring this closely with aggressive enforcement,” he added.

Meanwhile, Rosol announced the enforcement of the Festive Season Maximum Price Control Scheme for Christmas 2020.

Through the 10-day scheme, 19 items will be placed under the controlled item basket, including eggs, chicken, vegetables and pork (for Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan).

Individuals who sell controlled items exceeding the maximum price can be fined up to RM100,000, or imprisoned not exceeding three years, or both. Companies can be compounded up to RM250,000.

Authorities said the cartel had been active for years and to avoid detection, they allegedly falsified import documents, permits and halal certificates, besides importing products from legitimate sources and mixing it with their stock.

Yesterday, it was reported that the Johor Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has opened investigation papers in connection with the smuggling of the imported meat.

“The products were said to have been smuggled through Johor’s main seaports, while the warehouse was believed to be where the smugglers generated fake labels and stamps, which would then be used on the repackaged meat products and sold nationwide,” said Rosol, however, said this revelation was exaggerated.

On the smuggled kangaroo and horse meat, we will look into it. So far, we do not have information on that,” he added.

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SUMMARIES

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