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Mustapa: Agriculture and Domestic Trade Ministries asked to present holistic study of national food supply



Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed delivers his speech at the Dialogue with the National Rehabilitation Council (MPN) with Association Leaders and Chambers of Commerce in Pulau Springs Resort, Johor Baru March 5, 2022. — Picture by Hari Anggara

PUTRAJAYA, Aug 22 — The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries (Mafi) and Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) have been asked to present a holistic study in relation to the direction of the country's food supplies, said the Special Task Force on Jihad Against Inflation committee member Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

This will cover studies related to smart farming strategies, land use for paddy crops, meat supply and the increasing price of mackerel, he said in a press conference after chairing the 12th meeting of the task force here today.

Mustapa, who is also Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy), said the committee has heard a presentation from the Malaysia Competition Commission (MyCC) regarding the study of five food items namely cabbage, mackerel, sawi (mustard leaves), baby formula and meat.

"It has been presented (the study), but we are only suggesting that this study from KPDNHEP's perspective should be combined with Mafi.

"For example, for smart agriculture and (that) related to paddy, efforts need to be implemented to ensure that areas of paddy cultivation do not decline," he said.

Regarding mackerel, he said the MyCC also made a presentation regarding increasing prices and that there are members of the public who are unable to afford buying this 'ikan rakyat' or people's fish.

He said Malaysia is dependent on 40 per cent of local mackerel production and 60 per cent of imported fish namely fresh fish from Thailand and frozen fish from China.

"It (fish price) has to do with the country's fishery resources. The action taken is to increase the supply of frozen fish because it is much cheaper than fresh fish," he said, adding that efforts need to be made to increase Malaysians' interest in eating aqua fish or 'freshwater fish'.

In other developments, Mustapa said the supply and price of local chicken were stable with the average at RM8.57 a kilogramme (kg), lower than the ceiling price of chicken set by the government at RM9.40 a kg in Peninsular Malaysia.

"There is no issue (oversupply), no issue over eggs; the price is in line with the price set by the government, which is for Grade A, for example, at 45 cents per egg," he said.

With regard to the "Keluarga Malaysia (Malaysian Family) Cheap Sale" (JMKM) programme, Mustapa said as of last week out of over 600 State Legislative Assembly (DUN) constituencies, 120 had implemented it.

"The Special Task Force on Jihad Against Inflation will continue to mobilise all five leading ministries to ensure that JMKM reaches all state assemblies at least twice a month so that as many people as possible can benefit from the JMKM initiative in reducing the burden of the cost of living," he also said.

In addition to KPDNHEP, the four leading ministries that work together towards implementing the JMKM programme are Mafi, the Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Ministry, Rural Development Ministry and Federal Territories Ministry.

The JMKM programme which gives people access to obtain essential goods at between 10 and 20 per cent lower than the market price, is scheduled to last for 18 weeks until the end of this year. — Bernama