

## Transporting food to rural areas during MCO high priority for state govt

BY SAM CHUA ON MARCH 28, 2020, SATURDAY AT 5:59 PM



Abang Johari (left) and Awang Tengah (right) posing for a photo during a survey at a supermarket at the Spring shopping mall here today, accompanied by other state cabinet ministers. Photo by Rosytein Emmor

**KUCHING:** Government agencies, the army and the Fire and Rescue Department (Bomba) will be engaged to assist with transporting food to rural areas, said Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan.

"Food stock is enough but the distribution of food items must be looked into. (Although food supply) in town areas and major cities is sufficient, our main concern is those in rural areas," said Awang Tengah, who chairs the newly formed food supply chain sub-committee.

He said that after engaging with the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, it was decided all selling points in rural areas should have enough food supply by leveraging transporters appointed to deliver the necessities to them.



"At this point of time, what is important is the speed (of delivery). How to deliver them (food) in an efficient and speedy manner (to rural areas)," he said at a press conference at the Spring shopping mall here today.

Awang Tengah added that the proper distribution of food and necessities will be monitored and coordinated with the respective district disaster committee and Resident's Office.

"During a committee meeting on Friday, I have told the respective stakeholders to discuss with their suppliers and increase their food stock to at least three months worth. They have now made the arrangement with all suppliers to make sure food supply is enough."

Moreover, he assured that the state has enough food supply throughout the Movement Control Order (MCO) period which will last until April 14 – with the supply of rice being able to last for three months while foodstuff like sugar, flour and cooking oil were sufficient for a month.

Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP) Sarawak director Dato Stanley Tan revealed that Sarawakians consume an average of 300 metric tonnes of rice per day, or about 9,000 metric tonnes a month.

Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abang Johari Tun Openg said they were collecting data regarding food stock in the state and concurred that delivering food to remote areas remains a priority.

"The retail food supply chain may have disrupted by the recent MCO situation so we have to seek solutions to provide basic food items, especially to those in need in remote areas," said Abang Johari.

He said the government was also closely monitoring the prices of food products and he asked everyone to obey the MCO's directive, stating that only one person from a family was allowed to go out to shop in order to break the chain of infection for Covid-19.

The chief minister further stressed that all costs involved in transporting food items to remote areas, including the use of helicopters, would be borne by the state government as part of its effort to contain the Covid-19 outbreak.

<https://www.theborneopost.com/2020/03/28/transporting-food-to-rural-areas-during-mco-high-priority-for-state-govt/>