

## Report: Malaysia to ban products labelled as palm oil free

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*Palm oil fruits are seen placed on a wheelbarrow at a palm oil farm in Klang, outside Kuala Lumpur. File Photo*

**KUCHING:** The Federal Cabinet has given its approval to the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry's proposal to ban products with "no palm oil" or "palm oil free" labels, a news report said.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail told reporters in Kuala Lumpur today that his ministry aims to introduce a ruling or an Act on the ban soon.

"This proposal was brought to the Cabinet on October 18 and agreed upon by the members.

"This move is also in line with the government's objective of supporting the palm oil industry via the Sayangi Sawitku (Love My Palm Oil) campaign," he said in a report by the Malay Mail.

Saifuddin said his ministry had conducted checks on 2,609 premises nationwide and found 12 products with labels such as "palm oil free" or "does not contain palm oil".



He said the enforcement officers had "advised" that the products be taken off the shelf which the vendors complied with.

Meanwhile, Primary Industries Minister Teresa Kok said that Indonesia, the largest palm oil manufacturer in the world, had a similar law in place to protect its palm oil industry, which sees food labelled as "palm oil-free" being banned.

She said most of the labels were used as a marketing gimmick by European manufacturers to paint a negative picture about palm oil.

She gave an example of a peanut butter brand that carried the label "palm oil free" although palm oil is not a necessary ingredient in peanut butter.

She said such negative and untrue allegations need to stop as it does not benefit Malaysia.  
"Why do you need to specify there's no palm oil here?"

"The negative perception and claims are untrue and gives a bad impression of palm oil-based products without being supported by scientific evidence," said Kok.

