

Sabah food industry to be eligible for sugar import permits

KUCHING: The liberalisation of sugar supply policy, via the issuance of sugar import licences, will also be implemented in Sabah soon.

Deputy Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Chong Chieng Jen said so far, the whole food and beverage (F&B) industry in Sarawak was happy with the liberalisation policy as it has reduced their production cost tremendously,

with savings of about RM1,000 per tonne of sugar.

"The APs are directly issued to the manufacturers, without any middleman or 'rent-seeking alibaba' which is the hallmark of the previous administration," he said.

"The sugar industry is just the tip of the iceberg. Other sectors like the rice industry, medical and medical equipment supply, Puspakom (vehic-

le inspection), telecommunication industry, etc all have tremendous impact on our everyday lives."

Chong said one F&B manufacturer in Sarawak obtained the sugar import licence late last year after applying earlier in the year.

Eight more F&B manufacturers subsequently applied and got their approved permits (APs) to import sugar as of this month, he said.

On the sugar AP application, Chong said any F&B manufacturer could apply to the ministry.

Prior to the liberalisation policy, the two sugar refiners based in the peninsula, namely MSM Malaysia Holdings Bhd (MSM) and Central Sugar Refinery Sdn Bhd (CSR), have enjoyed the exclusive rights to supply sugar to the whole country, — Bernama.