

Consumers 'fishy' over high price of food items

PETALING JAYA: Amid the ongoing issues, consumers are finding something "fishy" about the high price of food items.

Housewife Liyana Md Jamal, 49, who stays in Shah Alam, said she would normally buy her groceries once a week for her family of five.

She admitted that the price of fish such as Indian mackerel (ikan kembung) have soared in the last few months.

"Last time we can buy ikan kembung at about RM10 to RM12 a kg. But now the price can go up to RM18 per kg.

"I can only stare at the price when I saw it," she said yesterday.

She said she would purchase another type of fish if the price of kembung was too high.

"If there is no other option, I would go for cheaper options such ikan cencaru (torpedo scad) or tenggiri (Spanish mackerel)," she added.

The government revealed that the latest market review report on the nation's food sector by the Malaysia Competition Commission (MyCC) highlighted several weaknesses and inefficiencies, which in turn resulted in a price hike of five food items.

They five food items are, Indian mackerel (ikan kembung), beef, infant formula milk, mustard leaf (sawi) and round cabbages.

Marketing officer Muhamad Zul Ariffin Rosli, 32, also expressed concern over the price of beef as Hari Raya Haji approaches.

"The price of beef is too expensive. I just bought a kilogram of beef for the family.

"It is about RM32 per kg at a market near my house in Damansara Utama. If I can cut the beef myself, I would do it," he joked.

Sabrina Mohamad Shabri, a mother of three boys, said that the price of infant milk took a huge cut out of her family's monthly budget.

"We spend about RM250 per month on infant milk powder alone. If you calculate it for a year, that is already a huge amount.

"There are other options but we want the best for our children," said the 34-year-old teacher from Alor Setar.

D. Priya said that she would buy the cheapest option in the market for her two-year-old daughter due to financial constraints.

"So far, the brand I bought cost about RM24 but I need to buy it every two weeks.

"I hope the government can do something to make it cheaper for us in the lower income group," said the secretary who lives near Batu Caves.

Malaysian Islamic Consumer Association secretary-general Datuk Dr Ma'mor Osman said such issues should not arise if the relevant ministries had planned properly and conducted frequent discussions for the benefit of the people.

"Such issues will arise especially during the festive season. If the authorities had planned much earlier, this will not happened.

"The opportunists will find ways to find excuses to push up prices," he said.