

Cabinet moves to ban anti-palm oil labels



Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the move was to ensure that no labelling of products with words such as “palm oil free, or “no palm oil” or any negative indication on palm oil. (NSTP/EIZAIRI SHAMSUDIN)

By Teh Athira Yusof, Nuradzimmah Daim
October 31, 2019 @ 8:30pm

KUALA LUMPUR: The Cabinet has approved a proposal for a new regulation to ban negative labels against palm oil from being displayed on products in the market, says Domestic Trade and Consumerism Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail.

He said the move was to ensure that no labelling of products with words such as “palm oil free, or “no palm oil” or any negative indication on palm oil.

“Checks done by the ministry found that some imported products carry negative labels about palm oil.

“Following this, the matter was brought to the Cabinet’s attention, and it approved the proposal to ban any label or sentences that negatively paint palm oil.

“The action is also in line with the government’s support of the palm oil industry through the Sayangi Sawitku campaign,” he said at the Parliament lobby today.

Saifuddin said the ministry had checked more than 2,609 premises nationwide and found 12 products which had the labels, “palm oil free” or “no palm” or other negative indications on palm oil.

He said enforcement officers had advised that the products be taken off the shelf.

"The ministry has taken a proactive move to check any products carrying the labels which indicate palm oil as negative.

"I would like to advise business owners not to display any products with those labels," he added.

Meanwhile, Primary Industries Minister Teresa Kok said most of the labels were used as a marketing gimmick by European manufacturers to paint a negative picture about palm oil.

She said some products such as peanut butter brands carried the label "palm oil free", even though palm oil was not even a requirement in the spread.

Kok said the negative and false labelling had to stop as it could hit the local palm oil industry hard.

"Why do you need to specify there is no palm oil in the brand?"

"The negative perception and claims are not supported by scientific evidence," she told a press conference in Parliament.

She said Indonesia, the largest palm oil producer in the world, had a similar law to protect its palm oil industry.

