

28 August 2007

By Melati Mohd Ariff

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 28 (Bernama) -- "Why not become a fussy consumer," this is the advice from the Minister of Consumer Affairs and Domestic Trade Datuk Mohd Shafie Apdal when officiating the Smart Consumer Day 2007 at the Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory level.

Though it may sound odd, it's probably the most appropriate advice. Being fastidious in comparing prices, quality, label and seeking alternative choices before making a purchase or using any services can make the difference.

Some may say being fussy is a negative trait and a waste of time, but it can save consumers from falling prey to unscrupulous businessmen and dubious business tactics.

PRICES ARE RISING

The ministry's Enforcement Director-General Mohd Roslan Mahayudin told Bernama during an interview at his office in Putrajaya recently that at present there are complaints on price hikes on several items like onions and poultry.

"As for the chickens, we will investigate why the ceiling price has reached RM6 per kg. Maybe many were having feasts during the recent school holidays and at the same time the beef price was at the high end. We hope that the beef shortage can be overcome soon especially looking at the upcoming celebrations," he said.

MUST FACE THE REALITY

Under certain circumstances, the price hikes are inevitable. Perishables like greens, fruits and fish are bound to see an uptrend in their prices due to the weather factor and others like meat would also see the same problem when the demand outstrips supply.

"As we advocate an open economy, we can't control the prices of all goods. Thus the prices are set by the market forces and when the demand is greater than supply we have to face the fact that the prices are going to go up.

Bernama : More Fussy Consumers Are Needed

Written by Administrator

Monday, 14 September 2009 17:05 -

"However, we at the ministry will keep a lookout on businessmen who take advantage of the situation. If their grounds for a price hike is justified, we will allow that and inform the consumers on why the prices have gone up," said Mohd Roslan who added that the department also gathers feedback from various ministries and government agencies in monitoring the supply of the products.

At the same time, he asked the consumers to act wisely under such situation.

"If the prices of certain things go up, consider alternatives. If the onions from India has been the choice all the while, why not change to the one from Indonesia or Thailand. Furthermore onions are not a must, they only enhance taste.

"Consumers should adopt some flexibility. They should think of spending wisely, buy only what you need and when you feel laws have been breached, inform the ministry, we can take action," advised Mohd Roslan.

Consumers, he said, can call the ministry's Enforcement Division at 03-88825500 or the toll free line 1-800-886-800.

Complains can also be forwarded through e-mail to aduan@kpdnhep.gov.my or <http://e-aduan.kpdnhep.gov.my>.

PRICE CONTROL MECHANISM

Consumers may be able to sigh in relief because the ministry also implements the Price Control Scheme during two major festivals, Hari Raya and Chinese New Year.

As for the coming Hari Raya, the enforcement department would beef up surveillance as early as September.

According to Mohd Roslan, under the Price Control Scheme, 19 items are listed as price controlled items under the Price Control Act 1946.

"The ceiling price is set to ensure consumers enjoy the products at reasonable prices. In deciding the ceiling prices, we first study the previous price trend, the prices from suppliers and compare with the prices in the previous years.

CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE

The government through the ministry conducts various programmes and campaign to enhance consumerism in the nation so that consumers are not only aware of their rights but are wise in spending too.

The same efforts must be taken by the consumer associations and non-governmental organisations to educate the consumers of the country.

Bernama : More Fussy Consumers Are Needed

Written by Administrator

Monday, 14 September 2009 17:05 -

"This is our programme to educate consumers but its impact is disheartening. There are some hardly bothered consumers, maybe because they feel they have too much money.

"If one questions why there is a price difference and if all consumers do the same, sooner or later the business fraternity would change their ways," said Mohd Roslan.

Sadly, the consumerism awareness in the country is yet to reach the desired level.

From a scale of 1 to 10, Mohd Roslan rated the consumerism awareness in Malaysia a conservative 5.

"A smart consumer society will expect less government intervention. Consumers in developed countries act on their own by boycotting the products or act through consumer associations without the authorities interfering.

"Actually, consumers can force producers and retailers to abide by their demands. Say if a product fails to meet the standard, like the recent recall of the toxic toys, they boycott the toys and inform the others through the web or consumer society bulletins and this will force the manufacturers to recall their products," according to Mohd Roslan.

OPS GAJI

Meanwhile, on the price checks under 'Ops Gaji' following the salary increment for 1.2 million public servants effective July 1, Mohd Roslan said; "We found that there is some increase and decrease in the prices. The goods that recorded price increase are powdered milk, sweetened condensed milk and cooking oil. However the increase is not more than 10 percent," he said.

Among the premise that came under their scrutiny were the retail shops, public market, night market (including farmer's market), pasar tamu, supermarket, hypermarket, food outlets, restaurants, stalls and the outlets at the highway R&Rs.

A total of 381,547 premise had been inspected from May 21 to August 15, 2007.

A total of 728 compounds were issued under Price Control Act 1946 (451 cases), Trade Description Act 1972 (74 cases), Weight and Measures Act 1972 (177 cases), Supply Control Act 1961 (10 cases) and Consumer Protection Act 1999 (16 cases).

Selangor tops on the number of action taken with 173 cases, followed by Perak (98 cases), Sarawak (93 cases), Kuala Lumpur (50 cases) and Sabah (48 cases).

The amount of goods confiscated is valued at RM429,738.50 while the compound issued is worth RM202,830.

-- BERNAMA

