

29 November 2007

I WOULD like to thank the Consumers Association of Penang for raising the issue of Rhodamine B again ("Stop use of banned dyes" - NST, Nov 23).

CAP should share with the Health Ministry information on the premises where six samples of <i>belacan</i> and one of <i>huat kueh</i> containing Rhodamine B were found (alleged to be the same premises in Penang and Kuala Lumpur where CAP had taken samples in April and May). Had CAP collaborated with us on the information, we would surely have raided the premises.
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For CAP's information, we do not analyse *belacan* alone but thousands of other products in ensuring safe food is sold to the public. There are thousands of premises in this country selling food to the public and our officers might have missed the shop that CAP took samples from.

In 2005, out of 320 samples of *belacan*, we found that five samples (1.56 per cent) contained Rhodamine B. We confiscated 870kg of the product. Legal action was also instituted.

Last year, 75 samples were tested and only six samples (8.0 per cent) contravened regulations. So far this year (up to April), 54 samples have been taken; only four samples (7.41 per cent) were found to contain Rhodamine B.

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