

'DON'T PANIC'

Shabery: Bird flu outbreak in east coast state under control

KOTA BARU: The public is urged not to panic over the avian flu (H5N1) outbreak in Kelantan as it is under control.

Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek said the relevant authorities had taken professional steps to prevent the disease from spreading.

"So far, the H5N1 virus had only affected kampung chickens. Commercial chickens are free from the virus.

"People do not have to worry about eating commercial chickens," he said after attending a briefing on the outbreak at the Kelantan Veterinary Services Department here yesterday.

The H5N1 virus was first detected in Kampung Pulau Tebu, Tunjong, here on March 6 after samples taken from a few dead kampung chickens tested positive.

Shabery said for Kelantan, as much as 70 per cent of commer-

cial chickens were obtained from outside the state, while the remaining 30 per cent were from breeders outside of the affected areas.

He said the supply of eggs (commercial) in the market in the state was 100 per cent from outside Kelantan.

"So far, six villages in five districts, namely Kota Baru, Pasir Mas, Pasir Putih, Bachok and Tanah Merah, were found to have kampung chickens infected with H5N1 virus."

He said some of the preventive measures that had been implemented were the culling of 28,000 birds, mainly chickens.

"Not all culled birds were infected by H5N1.

"It was more of preventive measure to avoid the poultry from being carriers of the virus," he said, adding that the government provided a scheme to allow farmers of culled birds to get compensation to reduce the losses incurred. **Bernama**



Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek watching as Kelantan Veterinary Services Department personnel examine a chicken in Pasir Mas yesterday.