

Incentives to reduce the burden of fish importers

IN the fisheries sector, the handling of fish is very important to ensure fish is of good quality from the supply chain up to the point that it reaches consumers. The lower quality of fish in physical terms, chemically and biologically has been attributed to the poor handling of catches, apart from the use of fish boxes of poorer design and quality which could not keep fish fresh for long.



Therefore the packing and handling of fish has become a main concern of LKIM in its effort to make sure that fish that are imported into the country are safe, clean and fresh, in line with the revamp currently underway in the fishing industry. Hence, the adopted measure on the use of better containers to ensure and maintain the freshness of fish sold.

Under regulation 16, Fish Marketing Regulations 1973, LKIM Act 1971, LKIM, under the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrobased Industry, is responsible for determining the type of packing used in exporting and importing fish, moving it from one place to another or selling it at any wholesale or retail market.

Since its announcement, the enforcement of food grade insulated fish box (KIBFG) use however has been put off several times due to objection from the parties involved, namely the fish wholesalers and importers. Taking this into account, LKIM set out to improve the boxes in terms of design to increase convenience for users. To reduce the cost of operation for fish importers and encourage the use of KIBFG, LKIM also lowered the fish import service charge to 3 sen a kilogram from 5 sen.

The Minister of Agriculture and Agrobased Industry Datuk Noh Omar, in a meeting with fish importers in Port Klang on 25 February, announced the staggered use of KIBFG beginning on 1 March with the use of 20% for every consignment and this would be increased by 10% every month until its full enforcement on 1 November 2010. Nevertheless, the use of existing boxes would still be allowed until 31 October 2010 to give ample time for importers to switch to KIBFG.

He said the government is always sensitive and concerned about reducing the burden of importers and therefore, at the same time, the parties involved should also support the Government in its effort to ensure that the fish supplied are fresh and also to curb fish smuggling.

In addition to that, importers have the choice of leasing KIBFG from public leasing services such as Persatuan Nelayan Negeri Kedah (NEKAD), Persatuan Nelayan Negeri Selangor (PENEGOR), Pelaris Edar Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Persatuan Nelayan Negeri Perlis and Mayang Sari Sdn Bhd.

Despite the objection from a handful of fish importers and transporters from November 2009



WHOLESALEERS have welcomed the usage of KIBFG.




Importers can obtain KIBFG direct from manufacturers and manufacturers need to fulfill the requirements already stated

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INFO IN BOX

Additional information regarding KIBFG

- Buyers can purchase KIBFG direct from manufacturers
- The Price of KIBFG is determined by its size

SIZE	ORIGINAL PRICE	AMOUNT TO BE PAID	EARLY BIRD INCENTIVE
100kg	RM205	RM145	RM60
50kg	RM125	RM95	RM30
30kg	RM105	RM85	RM20

- Manufacturers of KIBFG need to fulfill the following requirements:
 - Be registered with LKIM
 - Passed all tests set by SIRIM and have obtained SIRIM certification
 - The insulated boxes have to be fixed with Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) chips.
- Buyers can refer to manufacturers to obtain KIBFG.
- Importers are entitled to a purchasing quota based on their fish import.
- Further information about appointed manufacturers can be obtained from LKIM office or by calling 03-2617 7000
- Early bird incentive ends on 1 June 2010. Importers need to make early bookings/direct purchase from manufacturers
- Incentives will be discontinued after 60,000 units of KIBFG are sold and after that the price will be determined by manufacturers.
- 60,000 units of KIBFG are deemed sufficient for 100% of imported fish from Thailand and Indonesia.



TESTS conducted by SIRIM also found that fish boxes that are being used at present contain plumbum.



INSULATED non food grade fish boxes are not suitable for transporting fresh fish for long hours.

to January this year, KIBFG had increasingly been used voluntarily at entry points such as Rantau Panjang, Pengkalan Kubor, Bukit Kayu Hitam, Kuala Perlis and Linggi. In fact, the issue of KIBFG and fish import boycott is now considered resolved when all importers and wholesalers agreed to use KIBFG in phases till this November, apart from agreeing to call off the import boycott as a result of a resolution at a meeting involving 35 importers of Indonesian and Thai fish with Minister Noh on 2 March.

"The issue of KIBFG use is considered settled through a resolution among the members of the Importers/Wholesalers and Marine Resources Committee in a meeting

with the Ministry on various related matters on the use of insulated boxes which had gone on for four years.

"Both parties have succeeded in resolving (this issue) in an amicable manner, and it happened because of less than satisfactory communication," explained Noh after the meeting.

What was certain was that the meeting was able to rectify the misunderstanding among the importers with regards to the Government's intention of enforcing the use of KIBFG for national food safety. In fact, the use of KIBFG would not result in the increase of fish prices in the market given the cost reduction incentives already implemented in encouraging its use.