

Chicken breeders hit by export ban

'Its impact is expected to last long after the ban to Singapore is lifted'

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JOHOR BARU: Local poultry breeders say they have been hit hard by the ban on exporting chicken to Singapore that started last Wednesday.

Johor Poultry Breeders (Small and Medium) Association secretary Lau Ka Leng said the impact of the ban is expected to last long after it is lifted and that it might drive some breeders out of business.

"The ban has only been in place

for less than a week and we can already feel the effect.

"As expected, Singapore is now looking into getting its chicken supply from other countries such as Thailand and Australia.

"This is a huge loss to local breeders who have been the main suppliers of chicken for the island republic all this while," he said.

However, Lau said one advantage Malaysian breeders might have in ensuring they could still supply chicken to Singapore after the ban is over is the country's

proximity to the city-state.

"When it comes to frozen chicken, Singapore may continue to get its supply from other countries even after the ban is lifted.

"However, for live chickens, where the chicken is slaughtered and chilled in Singapore, we may still have an advantage as we are located just next door.

"This makes it easy for the chicken to be transported to the island republic. In this sense, there is hope that Singapore would still seek Malaysian breeders after the ban is

lifted," he said.

Lau also voiced his disappointment over the government's decision to stop providing subsidies to chicken breeders starting July 1.

"We are disappointed with such a move as we feel that we are left to shoulder the burden of the increasing cost of breeding the livestock.

"I believe more breeders would scale down their business or even look into other ventures as a way to cope with the situation," he said, adding that this could worsen the chicken shortage.

Starting last Wednesday, Malaysia imposed a ban on the export of chickens to Singapore until domestic prices and production stabilise.

Prior to this, Singapore imports about a third of its chicken, or more than two million birds monthly, from Malaysia.

Following Malaysia's export ban, Singapore said it is expecting more supplies of chilled chicken from Australia and Thailand, as well as frozen chicken from countries such as Brazil and the United States in the coming weeks.