

TRADE RESTRICTIONS WITH THAILAND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL PRODUCERS - DOF

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PUTRAJAYA, June 18 (Bernama) -- The ban on prawn imports from Thailand and curbs on seabass exports to that country are expected to provide opportunities for local producers to increase output, strengthen the domestic supply chain and reduce reliance on imported sources.

Department of Fisheries (DOF) director-general Datuk Adnan Hussain said the country's prawn supply remains stable and sufficient to meet domestic market demand, while the local aquaculture industry has adequate capacity to offset any supply shortfalls gradually.

"The country's prawn supply remains stable and sufficient to meet domestic market demand. Any changes in import patterns will not affect food security, as the domestic aquaculture industry has sufficient capacity to gradually fill any supply gaps.

"At the same time, the situation presents an opportunity for local producers to further increase production, strengthen the domestic supply chain and reduce reliance on imported sources," he said in a statement today.

According to Adnan, Malaysia had previously recorded a strong seabass export performance, with Thailand remaining the country's main export destination.

He said that from 2022 to 2024, the value of Malaysia's seabass exports to Thailand grew by 55.7 per cent in compound annual growth rate (CAGR), rising from RM38.21 million to RM92.64 million, while export volume increased from 4,838 metric tonnes to 9,285 metric tonnes.

"In 2024, Thailand accounted for 80.6 per cent of Malaysia's total global seabass export value of RM114.99 million, highlighting the industry's heavy reliance on the Thai market," he said.

However, he said the current shift in trade policies posed new challenges to the local seabass industry, as reduced access to its main export market could increase pressure on the domestic market through oversupply, which in turn may affect farmgate prices and profit margins for aquaculture operators.

"The ban on prawn imports from Thailand is expected to affect domestic market supply patterns, but any supply shortfall is expected to be offset by local prawn production, which remains stable and competitive," he said.

Adnan said existing domestic production capacity, particularly through the aquaculture subsector, was capable of meeting rising market demand gradually without compromising the

country's food security.

"The current developments also present strategic opportunities to strengthen downstream industries through the development of value-added products, expansion into new markets and reduced reliance on imported sources, thereby enhancing the resilience of the country's fisheries industry in the face of global market uncertainties," he said.

He stressed that the department would continue to monitor developments and strengthen strategic intervention measures, including exploring alternative markets, reinforcing the domestic supply chain and providing continued support to industry players to ensure that the country's fisheries sector remains competitive, sustainable and resilient.

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TAGS: Department of Fisheries, Adnan Hussain, prawn, seabass, import, export, Thailand

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