

Forget about price hikes, traders told

Defaulters will face penalties; the government plans to set up a permanent panel to monitor prices

By Rayeesa Absal
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ABU DHABI Following complaints by residents, the Ministry of Economy (MoE) has warned wholesale and retail traders in the capital against increasing the prices of essential foodstuffs during the month of Ramadan.

The ministry, in association with the Abu Dhabi Municipality, is to conduct inspections and impose penalties on traders involved in increasing prices.

Residents had complained of a huge rise in prices of fruits and vegetables and accused traders of trying to make a fast buck during the Holy Month.

Representatives from the Ministry of Economy (MoE), Abu Dhabi Department of Planning and Economy (ADPE) and Abu Dhabi Department of Municipalities and Agriculture (ADDMA) also decided to set up a permanent committee to monitor prices.



Residents say traders had sufficient time to ensure that there were enough supplies to meet the Ramadan demand for fruits and vegetables. (Aamir Shah)

A statement issued by MoE says, "The ministry has been closely monitoring commodity prices across the country and has noted that prices have been increased in Abu Dhabi".

The MoE has begun sending market researchers to various supermarkets across the nation to survey and tabulate the prices of essential commodities.

A MoE source says, "The department is aware of the increase in prices, since we have been documenting and monitoring the prices for a few months now. Traders will not be allowed to hike prices un-

reasonably and immediate measures will be adopted to prevent any price hike from affecting residents."

Residents say that the price hike is "totally unreasonable". Fahim Sultana, a homemaker says, "We have enough problems like the soaring rents and the high cost of living to deal with already. We have no need for this."

Agreeing with her, Suhais M., a teacher at an Indian school says, "Considering it is the Holy Month, fruits and vegetables should be accessible to all. In fact, the government should work towards re-

main suppliers blamed for hike

■ The main suppliers of fruits and vegetables have been accused of holding back stocks and raising prices. This was revealed following a meeting between MoE, ADDPE and ADDMA officials.

■ It has been decided that ADDMA will monitor any future price hikes and take action against suppliers found to be manipulating the market.

■ Necessary measures will be put in place to allow direct sale of farm produce to consumers.

ducing prices at this time of the year. No doubt, the demand for fruits and vegetables is more during this period, but there is ample time to plan and anticipate it."

Mohammed Khan, a laborer working with a construction company, says, "Normally, I break the fast with fries and fruits from a restaurant here. It is not heavy on the pocket that way, but I am sure those with families here would be finding it hard to deal with the price hike."

Fight continues over import of Australian sheep

By Veena Kuruville
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DUBAI The scuffle centred on the import of Australian sheep to the UAE seems unwilling to die down, despite governmental support guaranteed by Mohammed Saeed Al Kindy, UAE's Minister of Environment and Water, to People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta).

A report commissioned by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) has deemed Australia's export practices "world-best livestock export standards". This thereby refutes claims made by Peta since May 2006 protesting the conditions under which these sheep are transported to the region.

Nigel Brown, MLA's manager of livestock services in the Middle East and Africa, further went on to label the campaign "stupid".

In reply, campaign coordinator, Maya Linden, said yesterday, "The report was commissioned by the live export industry themselves, rather than an independent third party, so it is no surprise to us that it has concluded with a positive finding."

"Readers can see our undercover investigation for themselves on savethesheep.com. Although PETA believes that animals should not be mutilated, killed or caused to suffer at all, right now, we are simply asking the Australian and Middle East live export industries to take some basic steps to improve animal welfare and end deadly live exports which are one of the worst abuses of lamb and sheep."

PETA activists, who met with Al Kindy on September 20, remain positive of improvement following assurances from the UAE government. Local Peta activist, Faye Peeters, said, "The sheep will now be transported directly to the UAE and they will be given adequate food and water."

Animal welfare activists are negotiating with governments in Egypt, Kuwait and Oman on the issue.

TELL US

Is inter-racial integration possible in Dubai?



REHNA DHILON
Recruitment consultant

"Inter-racial integration is inevitable in the years to come. This applies to Dubai too."



KRISHIN VIVEK
Security officer

"Inter-racial integration is possible in Dubai. People here are very friendly."



OSAMA SWALMEH EBRAHIM
Engineer

"Yes, inter-racial integration is possible in Dubai because it is a multicultural place. In most offices, there are people from 10 to 15 different countries working together, so the atmosphere is just right."



WEAM ASHKAR
Student

"Of course, there is room for more inter-racial integration. It is great that we in Dubai get the chance to interact with people from different backgrounds."

THIS MORNING lights, action



For these workers, engaged in some welding work on an iron girder in a workshop at Al Quoz industrial estate, it surely pays to be precise. (Aamir Shah)