

# Better protection for animals

THE Animal Welfare Bill 2015, which was tabled by Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Ismail Sabri Yaakob, will pave the way to protect animals against mistreatment and cruelty.

The new law will cover individual owners or bodies involved with animals such as animal homes, shelters or sanctuaries.

Under Section 29 of the Bill, those convicted of animal cruelty may face a RM20,000 fine, a jail term of three years or both upon conviction. The section defines cruelty as anyone who beats, kicks, overloads, tortures, terrifies or causes unnecessary pain or suffering of any animal.

It also covers neglect by the owner or body which fails to provide sufficient food, drink or shelter. This includes how the animals are confined, chained, tethered or kept in overcrowded conditions.

It will also be an offence for people who abandon their animals which would result in suffering.

Section 26 states that animals used in research, testing or teaching must be done in a manner whereby they must be kept properly, treated accordingly for injuries and reducing pain or distress.

The other sections provide punishments for using animals for betting purposes, killing them unless it is needed to control infectious diseases.

Offenders would also be charged for neglect, deliberately poisoning them and failing to care for their animals.

An animal welfare board would also be set up to monitor the work of associations or bodies involved in animal welfare activities.

The Bill will be debated during the next meeting in May.

The Star

10/4/15