

House passes Animal Welfare Bill 2015

KUALA LUMPUR: The penalty for animal cruelty will not be a slap on the wrist any more for animal abusers. Under the Animal Welfare Bill 2015, which was passed yesterday, they face a minimum fine of RM20,000.

Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob told the house that the new law would not replace the Animals Act 1953.

Instead, he said, the new law would cover a broader spectrum based on the principles of the welfare of the animals.

The existing law focuses on the abuse of animals and does not provide legislative power to the Veterinary Services Department in carrying out enforcement actions.

Animal activists have long demanded for heavier penalties for animal cruelty offence as Section 44 of the Animals Act provides a maximum penalty of a RM200 fine and six months' imprisonment.

Ismail told the house that the local councils would not be exempted from the law.

"If they are found to have committed any form of cruelty under the law, they will have to face the music."

Clause 29 states that cruelty offences include the act of beating, mutilating, poisoning, confining in area that restrict natural movements of the animals, abandoning or the act the owner of allowing such cruelty against the animal carry a

minimum fine of RM20,000 and a maximum penalty of RM100,000 fine and a three-year imprisonment.

Meanwhile, the killing of animals under Clause 30 also states a minimum fine of RM20,000 and a maximum RM100,000 fine, and three-year jail term.

The clause contains the provisions that allow the killing of animals in certain circumstances, including for the purpose of human consumption; or that the animal is deemed incurable by the veterinary authority; necessary to end the animal suffering; done to prevent imminent danger to human's life or limb; population control by the authority under the law; approved by the animal ethics committee at the end of any research; and for any other reasons determined and certified by a veterinary authority.

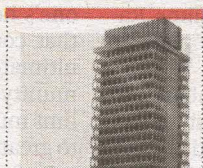
The law also specified the establishment and functions of the Animal

Welfare Board.

Speaking at the Parliament lobby, Ismail said it would seek to educate Malaysians on animal abuse.

"It will also look into forming guidelines and regulations that can be used by the local councils and pet shops.

"For example, it will determine the size of the cage a pet shop can keep birds or cats in, and how many livestock can be carried on a lorry according to its size and tonnage," he said.



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