

NGOs consulted for new animal welfare bill

TALK AND ACT: Veterinary Services Department to engage in talks with experts on new Animal Welfare Act

SARAH RAHIM
KUALA LUMPUR

streets@nstp.com.my

THE Veterinary Services Department will consult the animal non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and industry players for their input on the new Animal Welfare Act.

Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Deputy Minister Datuk Chua Tee Yong said the consultation phase of the new act to provide better welfare legislation for pets and livestock would be completed by the end of next month.

"The new act to aid in enforcement will take into consideration the current industry environment. It will be available for public review after the process," said Chua at a press conference after the 10th Malaysian National Animal Welfare Foundation (MNAWF) Canine Sportzclub Obedience Training graduation ceremony at Central Park, Bandar Utama.

Sixty-eight dogs graduated from 10-week basic, pre-novice and novice courses.

Chua said the ministry wanted to table an amendment to Animals Act 1953 (Revised 2006) to increase the penalty of RM200 to RM50,000, and the jail term of six-months to a year for animal cruelty.

Chua said the Veterinary Services Department was also providing care practice guidelines for pet owners and suppliers of products and services such as pet hotels. The department is also developing an accreditation system.

"For example, Canine Obedience Training courses, which employ humane methods, are endorsed by the department," he said.

He said the ministry was looking to set up a centre of excellence for animal welfare standards research in collaboration with World Organisation for Animal Health and experts from Australia and New Zealand.

MNAWF chairman Datuk Dr Mo-



Datuk Chua Tee Yong (fourth from left, back row) with the 'graduates' and their owners on **Canine Sportzclub Graduation Day** at Central Park, Bandar Utama. Pic by Nurul Syazana Rose Razman

hd Nordin Mohd Nor said the foundation was ready to expand the courses to more places and cities after training more than 1,000 dogs.

"MNAWF aims to improve awareness of animal welfare by going beyond emotional attachment to the animals to study the technical and

scientific aspects," he said.

Rikki Tan, 27, from Subang Jaya came to Bandar Utama to register Gunner, a 7-month-old labrador, for a basic course.

"He is very active and can be aggressive. I would like him to be more disciplined," he said.

Each training course costs RM150.