

Let us all put an end to animal cruelty

ANIMAL lovers can look forward to an end to animal cruelty and abuse with the proposal by the Department of Veterinary Service (DVS) to introduce the Animal Welfare Bill in Parliament.

The decision by the DVS to brief all the stakeholders with regard to the proposed Bill is a step in the right direction.

It is very appropriate for the DVS to engage the stakeholders and also to post the concept draft on the DVS website, for non-governmental organisations and the public to voice their concerns, opinions and suggestions on the critical issue of animal welfare. A bill such as this concerning animal welfare will surely attract numerous comments and suggestions.

Public consultation is indeed very vital. The proposed Bill should take into account the views of animal welfare groups, and all other stakeholders who have invaluable input in this regard.

Pets have to be treated better and not as commodities that can be acquired and thrown away

on a whim.

Do not buy pets for fun. They must be treated as companions for life. Be with them through good and bad times. Love them and be loved unconditionally.

Pet shops must be better regulated and animals must not be crammed in cages as there are shops that only provide space for an animal to stand in and turn around in cages where hygiene is lacking.

Having pets is a huge responsibility and people should think long and hard before acquiring dogs or cats.

Pet owners should always be reminded of their responsibilities to reduce incidence of dumping and abuse of pets. The abandonment of pets should be viewed as a serious offence.

Humane methods must be applied by all local authorities when handling strays. So far our record of handling strays falls short of expectations in terms of putting a stop to animal cruelty.

Animal lovers have stood by and watched

helplessly as animal abuse cases are committed daily, such as local municipal employees – except for a few local authorities – handling stray dogs with brute force; pet owners neglecting or abandoning their pets; zoo animals living in deplorable conditions; and strays brutally treated, maimed or killed by cruel individuals.

It is hoped that the proposed Animal Welfare Bill will put an end to inhumane acts against animals and help improve Malaysia's standing worldwide in the area of animal welfare.

The big challenge now is to ensure that the Bill gets to Parliament as soon as possible, is debated, passed and enforced.

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> Concerned parties can also help to shape the proposed Animal Welfare Bill by completing the SPCA Selangor survey (go to <http://alturl.com/mjkfv>). The survey ends today.