

Ministry lobbying for more animal hospitals

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia, which has just one public veterinary hospital, will be pushing for more under the 12th Malaysia Plan.

"We are campaigning to create more awareness on animal welfare but we must also have the facilities," said Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek.

The yardstick to measure a nation's success is not just by the number of roads built, but also by how its people respect and treat living beings, he said.

He said the ministry would propose for more Government veterinary hospitals to be built nationwide.

The proposal, he said, would be forwarded to the Economic Planning Unit to be part of the next 12th Malaysia Plan.

The public veterinary hospital is located in Cheras here.

However, there are Government veterinary clinics in every district nationwide, he said after attending the inaugural national level Animal Day celebration at the Kuala Lumpur Veterinary Hospital in Cheras yesterday.

This is in conjunction with the World Animal Day celebration, which falls on Oct 4 annually.

A number of fascinating events were held yesterday, such as demonstrations on dog obedience training and an adoption drive for cats and dogs.

Ahmad Shabery said Malaysia had also strengthened legislations to protect animals.

With the Animal Welfare Act, which will be enforced next year, Ahmad Shabery said abuse and cruelty against animals would no longer be tolerated.

"I believe if you slap someone, the punishment under the Penal Code is merely a fine of RM2,000.

"But if you kick an animal, the fine under



Feline friends: SK Ampang pupils playing with cats during the inaugural national level Animal Day celebration at the Kuala Lumpur Veterinary Hospital in Kuala Lumpur. — Bernama

the Animal Welfare Act is up to RM20,000," he said.

Ahmad Shabery also thanked non-governmental organisations and animal activists for constantly speaking out on animal welfare.

He said more awareness must be raised on animal welfare, especially among children.

Children, said Ahmad Shabery, must be educated from a young age to respect and treat animals as living beings, and not as objects.

The ministry would be doing its part in creating public awareness by campaigning in schools, the media as well as on social media.