

# Animal Welfare Act to be enforced in June, says minister

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Animal Welfare Act 2015, which was passed to give better protection to animals, will be enforced in June.

Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek said the law would have a higher degree of deterrence against cruelty to animals.

"There is no reason for us to delay something (the enforcement) that we initiated. Everything is being done according to schedule.

"I am an animal lover and I would like to see it (the enforcement) happen during my time in office," he told the *New Straits Times* yesterday.

The NST had on Sunday, reported that animal welfare activists were crying foul over the non-activation of

the act despite being passed in Parliament nearly two years ago.

Activists had said there was an increase in cases of animal abuse that could have been prevented if harsh penalties



Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek

were imposed on offenders.

Shabery said the period of two years was needed to work out details of the implementation of the act, such as ways of enforcement and mode of issuing compounds.

He said the ministry was working with the Education Ministry to incorporate the topic of animal welfare into the school syllabus.

"This will take effect after the act has been enforced.

"Education is crucial to create awareness and inculcate love for animals in the younger generation," he said.

Under the act, punishment involved a fine of between RM20,000 and RM100,000, and up to three years' jail for those found guilty of beating, mutilating, poisoning, confining or restricting the natural movement, and abandoning animals under their care.

This is unlike the Animals Act 1953, which carries a fine of up to RM200 or six months' jail.