

Putting a stop to animal brutality

ONCE again, we are shocked by another abuse case involving a helpless animal.

This time around, it was reported that a dog was tied to the rear of a lorry and dragged down a road, believed to be in Limbang, Sarawak.

The video images of the dog have turned viral and a police report was lodged in Kuching, prompting the Limbang district police to launch an investigation.

Firstly, I would like to thank those who highlighted the incident and the man who lodged the police report, which shows that the awareness level on the issue has increased.

At the same time, I would like to commend the swift action of the police in investigating the case under Sarawak's Cruelty to Animals (Prevention) Ordinance 1963.

We should never tolerate such a heinous act and those involved must be severely punished.

I really hope that the perpetrator can be charged under the Animal Welfare Act 2015, which was passed last year.

Under the new Act, those found guilty of cruelty against animals can be fined between RM20,000 and RM100,000, and jailed up to three years.

Cruelty offences include the act of beating, mutilating, poisoning, confining in areas that restrict natural movements of the animals, and abandonment.

Unfortunately, the Act has yet to be enforced in both Sarawak and Sabah and therefore, I would like to urge both the Federal and State governments to find ways to ensure that it could be done as soon as possible.

I have always stressed the importance of having an animal welfare policy in the country if we want to be a developed, caring and compassionate nation.

This is crucial since the Veterinary Services Department had in 2015 received 334 complaints on animal cruelty. In 2014, it was 266 complaints; 2013 (255 complaints); 2012 (280 complaints); 2011 (168 complaints); 2010 (134 complaints) and 2008 (288 complaints).



Research in Massachusetts, United States, also shows that animal abusers are five times more likely to inflict abuse against children and women, and become a menace to society while the FBI also considers animal cruelty a red flag to identify an abuser.

We must always remember that animals are part of our community, whether as pets, strays or animals in captivity (*pic*) and those roaming freely in the wild.

It is our responsibility to care for them as they cannot talk or look for help when abused.

Animal cruelty can be prevented if we can fulfil the five freedoms for animals, namely freedom from hunger or thirst; freedom from discomfort; freedom from pain, injury and disease; freedom to express their normal behaviour; and freedom from fear and distress.

Therefore, I would like to stress that punitive action must be taken against the abusers of animals in addition to campaigns to educate pet owners about their responsibilities.

Any form of brutality against stray animals must not be tolerated and the relevant authorities must put a stop to it through caring and effective legislation, including the Animal Welfare Act 2015.

As the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle once said: "At his best, man is the noblest of all animals; separated from law and justice he is the worst."

TAN SRI LEE LAM THYE
Patron, SPCA Selangor



your
opinions

EMAIL: editor@thestar.com.my

MAIL: The Editor,
Menara Star, 15,
Jalan 16/11, Section 16,
46350 Petaling Jaya.

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The STAR
11/1/2017