



24 December 2010

The Editor
Straits Times Forum

Dear Sir,

Two reports on page B3 Home page (December 20 S.T.), “*Study on facility to breed large animals for tests*” and “*Dolphin exhibit still part of RWS’ plan*” are reasons for grave concern among those of us involved in animal welfare.

Animal experimentation

It was highlighted that Singapore is studying the feasibility of building a facility to breed large animals like pigs and monkeys for scientists to test advances on. With significant expenditures in the billions being set for biomedical science research over the next five years by the government, the question arises as to how many animals will be put through medical experiments in these laboratories? As much as animal experimentation has been beneficial in aiding medical researchers in the study of diseases afflicting humans, it cannot be denied, that it has been at great expense to the animals involved. Aside from this, there is also no guarantee that what works on animals will work on humans.

Inspections once a year by the Agri-food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) is a basic requirement, but is it adequate when the lives of so many sentient and intelligent beings are involved? The industry is largely self-regulated, which over time could easily result in complacency or loss of sensitivity to the animals being studied. What goes on behind closed doors cannot be imagined, in terms of pain, discomfort or mental distress endured by a laboratory animal.

The SPCA agrees with ACRES (Forum S.T. 24 December), that more effort should be made in reducing, refining and replacing animals in the field of scientific research in Singapore. We also would reiterate the urgent need to bring about more transparency in the industry here, and ask that independent checks of animal research facilities by animal welfare organisations be permitted.

Dolphin exhibits to proceed at RWS

It was announced by Resorts World Sentosa (RWS) recently that it would proceed with the importation of wild caught dolphins, despite the death of two of seven dolphins at a holding area in Langkawi Island, Malaysia. The capturing and confining of any wild creature with the intention of transforming its natural lifestyle and habits for human enjoyment, and revenue is immensely cruel. The suffering of these creatures in the build up to becoming trained performers is also unimaginable with minimal educational value to the public. Getting up close and personal with wild and unpredictable creatures also puts the public at risk.

The SPCA urges Resorts World Sentosa to seriously reconsider its decision to be party to such a cruel trade.

Yours sincerely

Deirdre Moss (Ms)
Executive Director