

SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

(In association with R.S.P.C.A. England) Patroness: LADY Y.P. McNEICE



21 January 2009

You
The New Paper

Dear Sir/Madam,

I refer to the letter "Cats are fine, but spare thought for other animals too" (The New Paper, 14 January) in which the writer urged SPCA to revise the current system of putting unsterilised cats to sleep.

We thank the writer for his concerns and for promoting kindness and respect to animals. The SPCA agrees wholeheartedly with him that people should be more tolerant towards our fellow earthlings.

For the record, the SPCA does not handle nuisance complaints about stray animals; neither does the SPCA round up strays that are surviving and thriving in our environment. We believe that sterilisation of strays is the humane and effective solution to helping solve the overpopulation problem.

If the SPCA had a choice, we would not put animals to sleep other than those that are chronically ill, or dying. The situation is such though, that we are the only organisation receiving hundreds (approximately 700) of unwanted animals (pets and strays) each month including cats, dogs, rabbits and hamsters. Less than 100 animals are adopted each month. Unfortunately we are having to compete with commercial breeders and sellers like pet farms and pet shops for homes for our animals. In view of the large number of animals coming in to the SPCA, we have a selection criteria for adoption based on health, temperament, age and space. Sadly, those that do not meet this adoption criteria will be put to sleep.

Many of the pet dogs and rabbits (given up by their owners or abandoned) we take in for instance, may have chronic skin problems which can take weeks to cure. A shelter environment is not a suitable environment for rehabilitation of sick animals in need of long term care – ultimately these animals would thrive better in homes, but there are very few takers of sick animals when we have so many healthy ones to find homes for.

SPCA is appealing to the public (pet owners and those who find a stray animal) to find a new owner/home for an animal they cannot keep rather than to bring it to the SPCA, where the chances are slim that the animal will be selected for adoption; for every animal a member of the public decides not to bring in to the SPCA, another one we take in will have a better chance of being selected for adoption. E.g. Up to 400 unwanted or abandoned pets end up with us every month – if each pet owner could take responsibility for finding a home for their unwanted pet, the SPCA would have 400 less animals' fate to decide.

Yours sincerely,

Deirdre Moss
Executive Officer