

18th April 2006

The Forum Editor
Straits Times Press

Dear Sir,

I refer to the article on the front of the Home page Straits Times 17th April, entitled 'Virus kills 3 pups – pet shop fined.' The SPCA would like to thank the Straits Times for highlighting this case which creates more awareness, as there is indeed room for improvement in the way many pet shops house and treat their animals.

Last year the SPCA received 40 complaints against pet shops. 19 of these were referred to the Agri-food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) for further action.

The latest case highlighted was indeed very sad to read. Not only was a pet shop licensing regulation breached, in that the puppies did not receive their vaccinations, but the puppies that were sold, suffered and died. That is cruelty, as the vaccination could have prevented the disease. Under the Animal & Birds Act, Part IV, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Section 43 (1) (d) 'any person who – by wantonly or unreasonably doing or omitting to do any act, causes any unnecessary pain or suffering or, being the owner, permits any unnecessary pain or suffering to any animal is guilty of an offence under this Act and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months.'

The lack of remorse on the part of the pet shop owner, also displays a lack of concern for the animals he makes a living from. The reply that 'maybe the virus was from their homes' is a lame excuse. What about the puppies that remained housed in the shop that died of the virus too?

The SPCA has written in to the AVA expressing the above concerns. It has also highlighted that stronger penalties are needed for breaching pet shop regulations for first time offenders such as in this case, where the fine was a mere \$100.

The public can also play its part to report such cases to prevent animal suffering and cruelty. For more information on animal cruelty and pet shop conditions, the SPCA has information on its website at http://www.sPCA.org.sg/help_us/stop_abuse3.asp and http://www.sPCA.org.sg/about_us/opinion.asp#8

Yours sincerely,

Deirdre Moss (Ms.)
Executive Officer