

# ***SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS***

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



5 March 2012

Dear Sirs,

I refer to the letter “Balance vital policies on pets” (Sunday Times March 04, 2012). I would like to address three issues Mr Philip Lee raised.

Firstly, he is right to observe that animal rights issues have been in the limelight of late; it is because it had not been brought to the forefront until now. In our heady rush to economic success to become the First World of this and that, we left behind segments of our population – the elderly, sick, the disabled, the special needs, the poor, and the animals. While over the years the various ministries produced goodies and demonstrated largesse to benefit the groups mentioned, sadly the animals are still left behind. If we, the animal welfare groups don’t stand up for them, who will?

Secondly, yes, we do have irresponsible pet owners who stand by and do nothing while their pets pee and defecate in public places. That is why education is of paramount importance. Each year the SPCA’s education team visits schools across the island, from primary schools to institutions of higher learning, to disseminate information about responsible pet ownership. We hope that through these informative sessions, that our young people, in their formative years, learn about respect and compassion towards animals so that when they grow up they are empowered to do the right and responsible thing when they become pet owners themselves.

But we cannot do it alone. The pet shops’ sales people must also do their part to educate the buyers on the attendant responsibilities that come with owning pets. When the sales people give erroneous advice or intentionally do not give proper information, or when they knowingly do not curb the impulsive buyers, the pets are neglected, discarded, and abandoned.

The SPCA advocates kindness, compassion and respect for our animals; the Society operates on the internationally recognised policy framework of the Five Freedoms, that animals have a right to -

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst;
2. Freedom from discomfort;
3. Freedom from pain and injury or disease;
4. Freedom to express normal behavior;
5. Freedom from fear and distress

The SPCA will not hesitate to investigate complaints where animals are neglected or subject to abuse, and we will refer errant pet owners to the AVA.

Finally, on the subject of pet ownership in housing board estates, the ASD and the SPCA have been working very closely with the Ministry of National Development since August last year to develop policies for rehoming x-breeds to HDB flats. While I cannot say too much at this juncture, the ASD and the SPCA have proposed stringent conditions for anyone who wishes to adopt x-breeds in HDB flats. The proposals are still being reviewed and we hope for a favourable outcome soon.

Corinne Fong  
Executive Director  
Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

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