



# For Immediate Release

## THIRD UNDERCOVER SURVEY OF PET SHOPS AND FARMS STILL SHOWS LACK IN STANDARDS

**Singapore, 22 October 2012** – The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) recently completed a third undercover survey, in a follow-up to the ‘Stop the Cruelty in Puppy Mills’ campaign that launched in October 2010.

Conducted sometime between August to October 2012, the two month undercover operation saw the SPCA visiting a total of 49 pet shops and farms, including 20 pet shops and 18 pet farms selling dogs. In November last year, a similar operation conducted saw a total of 22 premises surveyed in total.

The survey results from the recent operation revealed that general hygiene and conditions of the animals have improved, but other prevalent issues such as mandatory licensing and providing correct and proper pet care advice are seriously lacking.

### Licensing

In relation to assisting with application of dog licences, there has been no improvement since the second undercover survey. 77 per cent (14 out of 20 pet shops and 13 out of 15 pet farms) of the establishments would not help with licensing. This is in breach of No. 14 under Regulatory requirements Pet Shop Licence Conditions in which it states that "when a dog is sold, the shop must apply for the dog licence for the buyer and lodge the microchip number of the dog with AVA".

Nine out of 10 farms selling large breeds or non-approved HDB breeds misinformed consumers to purchase the animal without informing the authorities, or to license the animal under another address, or keep the animal at home without attracting attention from the neighbours. One such ignorant establishment said to license a pet through the HDB.

## **Pet Care**

No pet advice was volunteered by the majority of pet farms and pet shops to prospective buyers. Most of the pet shops did not display any pet care information or give out any pet care leaflets, even when questioned extensively about pet care. There was also no emphasis on responsible ownership as buyers were widely recommended and encouraged to cage the animals for toilet training or confine them in small spaces for long periods - from half a day to 22 hours for three weeks to three months duration. Other improper suggestions included "minimise taking the puppy out", "try not to take the puppy out of the cage as it is too young", "let it stay in the cage till you are back from work", and "the puppy must be caged until its vaccination".

94 per cent of pet farms and shops would not provide details or allow the viewing of puppies' parents while only 34 per cent of shops and farms displayed their grading.

Corinne Fong, Executive Director of the SPCA says "Two years on and the extent of improvements and progress is dismal. Compliance of the law such as mandatory licensing at point of purchase remains a nagging issue and requires immediate addressing. It is disheartening to hear the misinformation offered to potential buyers by the pet shop attendants despite structured training in pet animal management and welfare made compulsory for the pet retail industry."

Veron Lau, President, Cat Welfare Society, said "It's been two years since the animal welfare groups have brought forward a set of recommendations to improve the standards of puppy farms and pet shops in Singapore and it is disappointing that the undercover survey still indicates that there is so little improvement. There is great urgency for better enforcement from the authorities and greater effectiveness from the pet shop association in upholding ethics and standards in its industry."

– Ends –

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About the *Stop the Cruelty in Puppy Mills*

The campaign was created to bring about awareness about the unethical and unacceptable practices of puppy mills in Singapore. This was sparked off by a case of 85 dogs rescued from a commercial puppy mill in Pasir Ris in April 2010. The dogs, kept solely for commercial breeding, were found with skin problems, tick fever with most, in severe need of medication. The puppy mill campaign is an extension and continuation of efforts by the seven welfare groups – Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), Animal Concerns Research & Education Society (ACRES), Action for Singapore Dogs (ASD), Cat Welfare Society (CWS) and House Rabbit Society of Singapore (HRSS), Animal Lovers League and Noah's Ark Cares - to raise awareness of the plight of the many animals suffering in puppy mills. For more information, visit <http://sgpuppies.com>

