

22nd November 2005

Forum Editor
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Straits Times

Dear Sir,

We refer to the recent correspondence on the feeding of stray cats in relation to the posters displayed by Tampines Town Council at a recent Social Responsibility Carnival.

Although we agree that feeding of strays must be done responsibly, it is regrettable that the posters conveyed messages that promoted a 'stray free' environment along with discouraging the feeding of stray cats.

If the town council is not against feeding per se and was trying to convey a message to feed responsibly, it certainly did not succeed. Nor was it necessary to use this approach. We have found that notices such as these have the opposite effect in that it causes people instead to 'ghost feed', ie to leave food and run off without getting caught, or even throwing food down from windows. The SPCA, had in June, produced a responsible cat feeding poster in three languages . It was sent to all Town Councils with a note that if they required additional copies, to please let us know. This invitation still stands. The objective of the notice was to create awareness among animal lovers on keeping the environment clean through responsible feeding of stray cats. The Cat Welfare Society also has a poster on responsible feeding, sterilisation and abandonment that we will be happy to send to any town councils or volunteers who may need them.

We would like take this opportunity to emphasize the importance of sterilization in keeping the stray cat (and dog) population at bay. Killing simply does not work and efforts for a more effective humane solution to the overpopulation of strays should be considered by the authorities.

For those members of the public who are feeding and caring for strays and would like to have a stray animal sterilized, the SPCA has a voucher scheme which covers the cost of the operation at selected veterinary clinics. You can read more about it at www.sPCA.org.sg

The Cat Welfare Society also has subsidized sterilisation slots for volunteers and can run workshops showing volunteers how to run Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage programmes to sterilise and manage the stray cats in the neighbourhood. This programme would include solving any problems that may be caused inadvertently by the presence of the cats. We are also more than happy to speak with any town council, management committee or residents' committee that might like to learn more about this programme.

Finally, we would like to invite any Town Council that is having a problem with overpopulation of stray cats and is keen to try out the sterilization method, to please contact one of the undersigned and we will be happy to meet up with you. Let us all work together to bring about a caring and responsible society which takes care of the homeless animals too.

Deirdre Moss
Executive Officer
SPCA

Dawn Kua
Director of Operations
Cat Welfare Society