

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

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



3 August 2009

Editor  
Straits Times  
Forum Page

Dear Sir/Madam,

I refer to the letter, "Cruel of owner to abandon defenceless puppy" (31 July) and wish to thank Ms Miriam Jayasuriya for highlighting this issue of pet abandonment.

The SPCA takes in around 80 lost dogs a month, some of which could have been abandoned by their owners. It is indeed sad that these animals are left to fend for themselves if not picked up by kind souls.

As part of our education efforts, the SPCA's education team goes out to schools regularly to share important animal welfare messages with students. The talks are aimed at inculcating a sense of respect for animals, and impressing the importance of responsible pet ownership. Other efforts include education visits for the young at our premises. These visits involve spending time with our furry companions whilst learning about their past, how to empathise with them and about animal welfare in general.

The SPCA supports the writer's suggestion that more needs to be done, other than educating. We have proposed that the Agri-food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) make it a condition (not just a guideline for best practices) that pet shops not sell animals to a young person unless accompanied by a parent. This will be a stepping stone to addressing the rampant problem of pets being bought on impulse, especially now that we are seeing an increasing number of small animals (which are usually less expensive to buy) given up or abandoned; June saw an all time high of 124, mainly rabbits and hamsters.

At present, all dogs must be micro-chipped, registered and licensed by law. The SPCA advocates that micro-chipping should be extended to other pets as well (cats, rabbits, guinea pigs e.g.), so that owners can be more easily traced if the pet is lost or abandoned. The cruel act of abandoning a pet is a crime in Singapore – those found guilty of such an act can be fined up to \$10,000 and jailed for up to one year, or both. To catch perpetrator/s though so that this law can be enforced, it is necessary for witnesses to lodge a police report and be willing to testify in court.

SPCA would like to take this opportunity to remind all pet owners and potential owners that a pet is for a lifetime of commitment.

Yours sincerely,

Deirdre Moss  
Executive Officer