



# NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

## **SPCA urges dog owners to microchip and ID their pets**

*The SPCA took in over a thousand lost dogs in 2008, with only a third claimed by their owners. Most had no microchip or identification*

**Singapore, 13 March 2009** – In 2008, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) took in a total of 8,738 animals. This includes 2,970 dogs, 4,117 cats and 1,141 small domestic animals, including 748 rabbits and 328 hamsters.

While no animal is turned away, we receive around 700 animals every month, more than one every hour of the day. From our experience, only 2 out of every 10 have the chance of finding new homes. The SPCA urges members of the public who bring animals to us to help save lives by finding them a home rather than abandoning or leaving them at the SPCA.

### **More lost dogs taken in**

1,162 lost dogs were received last year, slightly more than in 2007. Just over a third (38%) was claimed by their owners. Most of the dogs were pedigree/pedigree crosses and the majority had no microchip or identification. This further strains the SPCA's resources, as we have to house and advertise these lost dogs and decide on the fate of those left unclaimed. Overall, 1,550 pedigree dogs were received. Of these, 421 (27%) were lost dogs claimed back by owners. Jack Russell Terriers, Maltese and Golden Retrievers were some common breeds abandoned or surrendered. A considerable number of Huskies were received as well.

Losing a pet can be a traumatic and stressful experience. Dog owners are reminded to microchip their dogs at veterinary clinics if they have not already done so. More importantly, they must license their dogs with the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority for the microchip to be effective. Microchipping is compulsory by law but it is useful when trying to locate your lost pet. Unlike collars or tags, which can be lost, a microchip is a permanent form of identification for your pet. Veterinary clinics and animal shelters such as the SPCA are equipped with scanners to read microchips, so if your microchipped pet is found, they can be quickly returned to their owners.

### **Sterilisation programme sees a significant drop in cat numbers**

Whilst the society has been taking in the same number of dogs over the past two years, the bright spot is that fewer cats have come through our doors, and the number is declining. In 2008, the SPCA saw a drop of 13 per cent - or 600 cats - taken in. Where the society used to take in an average of 500 cats a month, the average is now 300.

This significant change in statistics is likely due to more stray cats being sterilised. The SPCA has implemented a free voucher scheme since 1991 and over 2,000 vouchers were distributed in 2008. These vouchers enable volunteer caregivers to sterilise neighbourhood cats at participating veterinary clinics at the SPCA's cost. The SPCA is grateful for the support from these vet clinics, who charge a subsidised rate for this scheme. An anonymous donor also contributes regularly to this voucher scheme, allowing us to distribute more vouchers than budgeted for. Currently, the SPCA channels \$4,800 per month to this voucher scheme, in addition to carrying out surgeries for strays at its clinic on selected days.

Although the demand for vouchers always exceeds the supply, many community cats are being sterilised, which ultimately means the number of births should decline. The SPCA wishes to commend the volunteer caregivers in our community for their dedication and commitment in helping reduce the number of strays being born.

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***About Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)***

*The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) is the first registered animal welfare organisation in Singapore. The two main objectives of the SPCA are to promote kindness and to prevent cruelty to animals. The SPCA is a charity depending on the kind donations from the public. For more information, visit <http://www.spca.org.sg>*