

To: Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Re: Progress in Introducing Additional Conditions of Animal Traders License for discussion on 9th June 2009

Ref: LC Paper No. CB(2)1755/08-09(03)

Date: 4th June 2009

SUBMISSION BY SALLY ANDERSEN, FOUNDER, HONG KONG DOG RESCUE

While in agreement with the majority of the additional conditions proposed for Animal Trader Licenses, I must voice strong objections to Point 4 (d) which states that puppies obtained from "bona fide" private pet owners would be permitted to be sold in pet shops. I would like to ask who will ensure that the stipulation for single breed and a maximum of 2 breeding bitches will be adhered to? It is my understanding, having been heavily involved in dog rescue and rehoming for many years, that AFCD are already stretched to the limit of their staff capability. As there would appear to be no limit set on the numbers of "home breeders" allowed, I find it impossible to believe that any checks could or would be made. How would this be possible?

Additionally, who would monitor the pet shops and their own checking of private breeders? (Point 8 (a)) It is unrealistic to expect this to happen, as much as it is unrealistic to expect that vets have the time to make home visits to unlimited numbers of private breeders to ensure that there are no more than 2 breeding bitches or that the puppies even belong to those dogs .

It would seem to me that while this all might sound good in theory, the practicality of ensuring the conditions are adhered to makes any sort of legislation meaningless and pointless.

The most important aspect of the "private breeder" loophole is that it leaves the door wide open to abuse in the form of a channel through which illegal (those bred and smuggled in from Mainland China) puppies could find their way onto the market. May I remind the panel that rabies is a serious threat in China, and all it would take would be for one infected puppy to make its way to the Hong Kong market for there to be a devastating result.

Why are we waiting for the first case of rabies to appear before taking action? We can assume that if, or should I say when, given the apparent ease at which puppies are currently coming into Hong Kong from across the border, rabies does return, there will be total panic and a mass cull of dogs. The prospect of this happening is a terrible one, but it is nonetheless real.

I urge the Panel to take this rabies threat very seriously and to close the loophole which would leave the way open for infected puppies to be introduced to Hong Kong.

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