

**Subcommittee on Resolution under section 3 of the  
Dogs and Cats Ordinance (Cap. 167) and  
Dogs and Cats (Amendment) Ordinance 1997 (97 of 1997)  
(Commencement) Notice 1999**

**Introduction**

We would like to comment on the results of the questionnaire on the controls of dangerous dogs proposed in the Dangerous Dogs Regulation (the Regulation) in the following paragraphs.

**Control of Fighting Dogs and Known Dangerous Dogs**

2. We note that Members agree with the leashing and muzzling controls of fighting dogs and known dangerous dogs but express reservation about the neutering of these dogs.

3. Neutering of fighting dogs, coupled with an import ban, aims to phase out fighting dogs from Hong Kong over seven to ten years. This objective is fully supported by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), the Hong Kong Kennel Club, the Hong Kong Veterinary Association and other individuals concerned. The neutering proposal is also in line with the international practice where neutering is mandatory for Pit Bull Terriers and other fighting dogs in Singapore, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and some states of Australia.

4. The phasing out of fighting dogs will not be achieved unless the neutering requirement for these dogs is retained in the Regulation. From a veterinary perspective, neutering is the only guaranteed method of preventing animals from breeding. Other methods usually fail or have side effects. Moreover, prosecutions against breeding activities cannot be established unless the dogs are caught in the act of mating and the owners of the dogs can be proved to be responsible for breeding, causing to breed or permitting to breed these dogs. Both conditions are very difficult to meet in practice. If existing fighting dogs are not neutered, they will breed and their aggressive tendencies will be passed on to the future generations of puppies. Neutering is required for these dogs to ensure that they do not pass on these characteristics to their offspring. We are also concerned that with the import ban on fighting dogs, illegal breeding activities, probably for profiteering purposes, may increase without the neutering provision.

5. Neutering is not cruel and has no long lasting negative effects on

dogs. It is universally accepted as the appropriate way to prevent animals from breeding. The operation is conducted under general anaesthesia and dogs usually recover quickly. There is no evidence to suggest that dogs have a sense of sexual identity or ego. They do not suffer from psychological disorders after neutering. According to published studies, neutered dogs have shown to be less likely to bite, less aggressive towards other animals, and to have fewer behavioural problems than their unneutered counterparts.

6. Known dangerous dogs include those classified as such by a magistrate after inflicting serious injury to animals or man, without provocation. The case for neutering these dogs is compelling given that they have demonstrated innate aggressiveness. Neutering of these dogs is the only guaranteed way of preventing this trait from being passed to their offspring.

7. We consider that the phasing out of fighting dogs and known dangerous dogs would help to protect the public from attacks by these dogs. These dogs are not only a risk to the owners/keepers and their families, but also to their friends or visitors in their homes. The leashing and muzzling requirements in public places will not provide enough protection as they do not apply inside private dwellings. We are very concerned that unless these dogs are neutered and eventually phased out, fatal incidents such as the one in Wong Tai Sin in 1996, may continue to happen, particularly in private dwellings.

### **No ex-gratia payments should be paid to dog owners who surrender their fighting dogs for destruction**

8. At present, owners can keep fighting dogs legally (subject to the licensing control) until such time as the Regulation is passed. The ex-gratia payment is included in the Regulation to compensate owners who surrender their dogs for the expense of purchasing and raising these dogs. Nevertheless, we are prepared to consider removing this provision if Members consider it appropriate to do so.

### **Leashing for all dogs, including large dogs, in all indoor and outdoor public places**

9. We have reviewed the data on dog bites and found little evidence to show that small dogs represent a significant risk to public safety. This is in contrast to large dogs, which are responsible for the majority of serious dog bites as presented in our previous submissions to the Subcommittee. Hence, we do not see the need to widen the scope of control to cover all dogs. Extending

leashing to all dogs will widen the control net further and will even include small dogs that are carried rather than walked.

10. We have proposed under the Regulation that the mandatory leashing requirement for large dogs should not apply to country parks to provide these dogs with an opportunity to be exercised off leash. Extending the areas to be controlled to all indoor and outdoor public places will reduce such opportunities for dogs.

**No muzzling is required for all dogs, including large dogs, in all indoor and outdoor public places**

11. In the light of the views expressed by Members and animal welfare advocates, we are prepared to remove the muzzling requirement for large dogs in indoor public places. Muzzling of large dogs in outdoor public places has never been a requirement in the proposed Regulation.

**Would the Administration consider separating sections pertaining to large dogs from the current proposed Dangerous Dogs Regulation?**

12. We are of the view that the Regulation should be considered as one package. The only measure proposed for large dogs is a leashing requirement for these dogs in public places. We believe this measure is justified on public safety grounds. It would greatly assist in the control of village dogs while still provide owners/keepers with ample opportunities to exercise their dogs off leash.

Environment and Food Bureau /  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department  
February 2000