



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局
 Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat
 The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
 The People's Republic of China

Our Ref: FHB/F 6/S/40/1

Fax: 2136 3282

(Translation)

29 July 2013

Clerk to Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
 Legislative Council Complex
 1 Legislative Council Road
 Central, Hong Kong
 (Attn.: Mr Jove CHAN)
 [Fax: 2185 7845]

Dear Mr Chan,

**LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene – Follow-up
 Actions**

Animal Police

At the meeting of the Panel on 21 January 2013, Members requested that the Administration provide a written response on its consideration and decision on the request for setting up “animal police” teams to handle cases of animal cruelty (i.e. item 7 of the list of follow-up actions (LC Paper No. CB(2)1284/12-13(02))). I am authorised to reply as follows.

At present, officers from various Government departments (including senior veterinary officers, health officers, health inspectors, police officers and authorised officers from the Agriculture, Fisheries and

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Conservation Department ("AFCD")) may take enforcement actions under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance depending on the circumstances. To further enhance co-operation in handling animal cruelty cases among the departments and organisations concerned, the AFCD, in conjunction with the Hong Kong Police Force ("Police"), the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Hong Kong) ("SPCA"), set up a special working group in 2011 to review the work on handling such cases. The Police, in collaboration with AFCD, SPCA, veterinary associations and animal concern groups, launched the "Animal Watch Scheme" in 2011 to fight against cruelty to animals through a four-pronged approach of education, publicity, intelligence gathering and investigation. The Scheme aims to strengthen the work of the Police in investigating animal cruelty cases. Through enhanced co-operation with different organisations and encouraging wider public involvement, it enables more effective prevention and detection of animal cruelty cases.

On law enforcement, the Crime Investigation Teams of various police districts have adequate manpower, experience and professional investigation skills to handle animal cruelty cases. Depending on the distribution of cases and the overall trend, the Police will consider deploying dedicated teams to carry out investigation work in a more comprehensive and focused way. The existing multi-agency approach is further strengthened under the "Animal Watch Scheme", which contributes towards combating crimes of cruelty to animals. By allowing flexible deployment of Police resources for effective action on animal cruelty cases, such arrangements may serve the functions of the "animal police" teams as proposed.

We are of the view that the most important part of our work to protect and enhance animal welfare lies with public education. In this connection, the AFCD has established a dedicated education team to devise, implement and fortify public education and publicity programme for promoting care for animals and pressing home the related messages. The "Animal Watch Scheme" is supported by the two professional veterinary associations in Hong Kong (i.e. the Hong Kong Veterinary Association, and the China (Hong Kong) Veterinary Association). They help encourage their members to report suspected acts of cruelty to animals or the suspected culprits, with a view to strengthening the intelligence network.

(Translation)

At the same time, the Police and AFCD welcome wider participation of members of the public and animal concern groups in combating cruelty to animals. Should any member of the public come across a case of animal cruelty, he/she may report to the Police or AFCD. Upon receipt of the report, the relevant department will take appropriate and prompt action to follow up.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

(Vinci CHAN)
for Secretary for Food and Health

c.c.: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
(Attn.: Dr Jeffrey JAI) [Fax: 2152 0320]

Secretary for Security
(Attn.: Mr Kilian TUNG) [Fax: 2810 7702]