



Society for the Prevention
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16th June, 2017

Ref: WF/115/FW/06/2017

Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Chair
Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to Animal Rights
Legislative Council
Hong Kong

Dear Dr Chiang,

“Issues relating to the promotion of animal-friendly measures (including public rental housing, public transport and public open space)”

The SPCA HK is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the discussion on the promotion of animal-friendly measures in Hong Kong.

The SPCA HK has long advocated for the better treatment of animals and for better consideration of the needs of companion animals and their owners.

Making Hong Kong as “animal-friendly” as possible through infrastructure and policy development is key to promoting animal and human welfare, as well as essential to reducing animal suffering.

For over a hundred years, the SPCA HK has handled, cared for and re-homed companion animals. We have a deep understanding of the many challenges faced by owners and companion animals living in Hong Kong. We also see firsthand how other animals in Hong Kong suffer due to a variety of factors, including due to the lack of, or inadequate government planning and / or policies.



In our past submissions to this committee¹²³ and the Subcommittee on Issues Relating to Animals Welfare and Cruelty to Animals (Legislative Council 2012 – 2016)⁴, we have made many recommendations that address animal welfare concerns to assist in developing a more “animal-friendly” Hong Kong.

These recommendations are still valid; many still await government attention and action.

This submission takes a broad view on how to help improve or safeguard the welfare of animals through a top level commitment and cohesive, cross bureau / department collaborations.

We also highlight some examples of areas that need addressing and also make some suggestions that could effect improvement.

1. An “Animal Friendly” Administration

There needs to be a truly “animal friendly” policy position that is adopted and adhered to across all bureaus and departments in the Government.

- a) There should be better Bureau and Department collaboration on issues that impact on the welfare of animals.**
- b) Animal welfare specialists, animal welfare scientists and technical experts should advise the administration at a higher government level on animal welfare issues.**
- c) Animal welfare should be specifically and separately represented on panels that oversee specific animal use or animal related issues.**
- d) There should be increased stakeholder engagement on animal and animal welfare related issues.**
- e) Increased resources should be committed to assist with practical implementation of policies, legislation and programmes.**
- f) Animal welfare (and the needs of owners and animals) must be considered in the development of Hong Kong’s Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030.**

¹ http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/panels/fseh/fseh_ar/papers/fseh_ar20170221cb2-813-6-e.pdf

² http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/panels/fseh/fseh_ar/papers/fseh_ar20170424cb2-1276-1-e.pdf

³ http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/panels/fseh/fseh_ar/papers/fseh_ar20170516cb2-1429-1-e.pdf

⁴ http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/fseh/fseh_awca/papers/fseh_awca20160322cb2-1112-13-e.pdf



The SPCA submitted comments to the Planning Department in 2016 as part of the consultation on Hong Kong's planning vision and strategy (Annex A) on how animals and welfare needs to be included and considered.

The submission also highlighted some specific elements that if addressed could help to improve "animal friendliness".

g) Sufficient land should be provided to support conservation, bio-diversity and animal welfare activities (including dedicated facilities) to meet the needs of both NGOs and Government working in these fields.

h) Animal welfare must be included as one of Hong Kong's sustainable development criteria.

In response to the Council for Sustainability's public consultation the SPCA submitted its opinions in relation to sustainability and some different aspects of animal use and animal welfare (Annex B).

2. Legislation

Much animal and animal welfare legislation needs revision and improvement. The SPCA continues to call for a comprehensive review of all animal legislation, and for priorities and a timeline to be set.

a) A new, overarching piece of animal welfare legislation such as an Animal Welfare Ordinance that protects all animals and introduces a positive duty of care on the caretakers and people in charge of animals needs to be developed.

b) Shortcomings and inconsistencies in legislation must be addressed, in particular:

- i. A review of CAP. 169 The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance and the development of specific animal welfare legislation should be a priority.
- ii. More species of animals should be protected under CAP 139 Public Health (Animals and Birds) Ordinance and more uses of animals should be regulated under this ordinance.
- iii. There should be tighter overall control and regulation of the pet trade in terms of selling and breeding under CAP. 139B. An increased number of species of animals should be protected and more uses properly controlled and regulated. Cat breeding and selling regulations should be increased / improved in a similar manner to that introduced for dogs.



- iv. Codes of Practice which are mandatory and give guidance on standards of care and specific requirements for different species of animals being kept in different situations (or used for different purposes) should be introduced to supplement primary legislation such as a new Animal Welfare Ordinance or regulations such as those issued under CAP 139.
- v. The exotic pet trade and species traded should be reviewed from the perspectives of animal welfare, conservation and public health. Policy positions should be taken on which species are suitable for keeping as pets in Hong Kong i.e. can be safely (in terms of animal welfare and veterinary public health) and sustainably kept.

c) Powers to readily update laws relating to animal protection in a timely manner.

3. A Companion Animal Friendly Hong Kong

The needs of people who own pets should be considered in all aspects of town planning, infrastructure development and management.

- a) In general housing should be designed to be pet owner and pet friendly.**
- b) The Housing Authority's policy and the rules on pet keeping (including dogs) should be reviewed and adjusted to reflect a more positive approach to pet ownership - providing a framework for a fair and enlightened policy that permits public housing tenants to have the option of keeping a dog.**
- c) Other subsidised housing with similar restrictive approaches to pet ownership, such as subsidised flats and Housing Association accommodation, should also change policy and rules on pet keeping.**
- d) The policy approach to pet owner and pet access to public open space should be more permissive and inclusive. An approach should be adopted such that that in principle all such parks should allow owners to enter with their dogs on a leash. Off leash areas may be provided.**
- e) Walkability and pedestrian connectivity is to be encouraged; pet owners should also be able to freely access all pedestrian routes.**
- f) The Food Business Regulations CAP 132X should be reviewed and amended such there is no longer a "carte blanche" ban on bringing pet dogs into food premises. Rules and regulations would still need to be in place but the approach should be more flexible and be based on the assessment of individual premises.**



- g) It should be possible for some types / sizes of animal to be transported in some manner (for instance on a leash, in a carrier, carried or on their owners lap) on different forms of public transport (Public buses, MTR, Light Rail, Trams, Star Ferry etc.)**
- h) The Government should continue to invest resources in education and training on understanding animals, animal welfare, animal care and responsible pet ownership.**
- i) Mandatory spay / neuter laws should be introduced as well as a differential licensing fee system to incentivise owners to neuter *and* license their pets.**
- j) Deficiencies in the Traffic Ordinance should be addressed.**
- k) Policies and procedures relating to carcass collection and disposal should be changed.**
- l) The traceability of all owned animals should be improved and there should be better regulation and enforcement of abandonment and related issues.**
- m) Shelter legislation should be enacted under CAP. 139 that requires animal shelter and related facilities and programmes to be regulated to safeguard the welfare of hundreds of resident animals. They should be licenced, inspected, staff training implemented, minimum standards set and mandatory codes of practice developed.**
- n) A policy decision should be made to adopt Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) methodology as an officially sanctioned methodology for dogs and cat population management so that it can be used more broadly to more humanely assist with their management in Hong Kong.**

4. Food Animals

Hong Kong has a relatively high level of meat and fish consumption with the overwhelming majority coming from intensive factory farming. In 2016, Hong Kong ranks in the world's top 10 importers of beef, chicken and pork.

- a) Hong Kong should include animal welfare as part of its sustainability criteria.**
- b) There should be a mandatory labeling scheme introduced into Hong Kong that lists the country of origin, type of farming systems used and method of slaughter so consumers can make informed choices.**
- c) There should be better regulation and legislation and oversight to protect food animals during transport.**



- d) Only Hong Kong reared food animals should be slaughtered in Hong Kong and be part of the “warm” meat supply (if this practice continues). It should be noted that the “warm” meat trade as currently practiced in Hong Kong is problematic in terms of public health and hygiene and food safety.**
- e) Slaughter in Hong Kong should be better regulated – more specific legislation should be drafted. Training and licensing of slaughterhouse personnel should be introduced alongside mandatory codes of practice. There should be independent monitoring of animal welfare during transport and in the slaughter houses.**
- f) Keeping live food animals of all species in wet markets, specialist shops, supermarkets and restaurants for later slaughter should be abolished. In the interim minimum standards and codes of practice should be introduced to try to safeguard the welfare of the different live animals kept in these places.**
- g) The relevant sections of CAP. 139B should be amended and expanded to include mandatory standards and minimum conditions and mandatory Codes of Practice to safeguard the welfare of farmed animals.**
- h) The definition of animals under CAP. 139 should be expanded to include farmed species or the keeping of food animals that are currently not included (fish, amphibians and others) and new sections introduced to cover their keeping and trade etc. Assessment of welfare should be part of the routine farm inspections carried out by AFCD.**
- i) Specific legislation should be enacted under CAP. 139 that requires commercial facilities and other facilities open to the public that keep domesticated farm animals (or other types of animals) for any purpose on site to be regulated to safeguard resident animals and ensure their good welfare.**

5. Wild Animals

Hong Kong is home to many wild animals which may be threatened or impacted due to development or human behaviour. In addition a large numbers of wild animals and their derivative products continue to enter legal and clandestine markets, continued existence of many species in the wild is threatened. Hong Kong plays a significant role as a trade hub.

- a) Wild animal habitats should be protected and not be fragmented**
- b) Infrastructure development should consider animals. For instance, barriers to natural wild animal movements should be avoided. Fencing and drainage**



channels etc. that could be hazardous for animals should be designed to minimise risks to animals

- c) Hong Kong should follow the recommendations made by the Hong Kong Wildlife Trade Working Group in its submission under the 2017 CE policy consultation exercise.
- d) The legal ivory trade in Hong Kong should stop sooner than currently proposed. No compensation should be paid to ivory traders.
- e) The Government should provide increased resources for AFCD to more effectively tackle illegal trapping. Furthermore, AFCD's current permissive policy on the possession of animal traps in certain areas and for certain uses should be reviewed.
- f) Education and awareness programmes about human-wildlife conflict should be developed to improve the public's understanding of the issues and to change the behaviours that escalate conflict.
- g) The public should be educated on the potential negative impact on the welfare of animals that can result from feeding wild animals (or those that are living in a wild state) and discouraged from carrying out such actions.
- h) The government should adopt a policy position of non-lethal control methods when working with wild (and other) animal populations.
- i) The conservation and animal management arms of AFCD should develop a risk assessment framework to support policy decisions on which "exotic" and endangered species may be "safely" imported. Legislation should be introduced to regulate the release of any animal to the wild. So-called "Mercy Release" should be banned.

Conclusion

The Society for the Prevention and Cruelty to Animals (Hong Kong) believes that there are many areas that can be improved upon with regards to promoting and developing a more animal-friendly approach in Hong Kong. We would be delighted to assist further on this matter as well as helping to further improve animal welfare.

Should you have any enquiries in relation to this submission please do not hesitate to contact us on [REDACTED] or by email c/o: [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely,

Dr Fiona Woodhouse
(electronically)
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Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (HK)

Annex A



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Ref: WF/L202/FW/04/2017

30th April 2017

The Planning Department
16F North Point Government Offices
333 Java Road
North Point Hong Kong
Hong Kong

"Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030"

Hong Kong is home to many wild animals and development outside the traditional urban areas is putting pressure on their natural habitats. In addition more people in Hong Kong wish to keep an animal as a companion and pet ownership in Hong Kong is increasing however much of Hong Kong's housing and infrastructure is out of step with such aspirations.

In light of the above the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Hong Kong) would like to make the following recommendations with regards to developing a planning vision and strategy for Hong Kong.

Recommendations:

Environmental protection and wild life conservation (biodiversity) should be a core consideration.

Hong Kong's Country Parks and Special Areas and Sites of Scientific Interest need to be protected as do other green areas that provide natural open space and are important habitats for wild animals.

Animal welfare needs to be considered - animal friendliness should be included in planning, design and implementation.

For instance:

- Wild animal habitats should not be fragmented
- Barriers to natural wild animal movements should be avoided



- Fencing and drainage channels etc. that could be hazardous for animals should be designed to minimise risks to animals
- Public open space should be increased, well-designed, conveniently located and be accessible to pet owners
- Public (and other) housing should be designed and managed to be animal owner and animal friendly
- Walkability and pedestrian connectivity is to be encouraged and pet owners should also be able to freely access all pedestrian routes
- Public transport should also cater for the needs of pet owners
- Sufficient land needs to be provided to support conservation, bio-diversity and animal welfare activities (including dedicated facilities) to meet the needs of both the NGOs and the Government working in these fields.

Legislative barriers or policy positions that could hinder implementing the above recommendations should be reviewed and removed.

We would be delighted to meet with representatives from the Planning Department and the Development Bureau to discuss and expand on the above recommendations. Should you have any enquiries in relation to this submission or to arrange a follow-up meeting please do not hesitate to contact us on [REDACTED] or by email c/o: [REDACTED].

Yours faithfully,

Dr Fiona Woodhouse

(electronically)

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Reference: WF/L177/FW/11/2016

Professor the Hon Arthur Li Kwok-cheung, GBS, JP
Chairman
Council for Sustainable Development
46/F, Revenue Tower
5 Gloucester Road
Wan Chai, Hong Kong

14 November 2016

Dear Sir,

Re: Public Consultation on Sustainable Consumption

The SPCA HK is pleased to see that the Administration has undertaken a consultation regarding sustainable consumption. In the consultation document, biological resources were divided into 3 main types, "namely animal resources, plant resources and microbial resources and recognised as "fundamental elements for our clothing, food and feed, shelter, fuel, paper and medicine, etc."

However, the SPCA HK notes that though animals are recognised for their key role in sustaining society, there is no mention regarding their sustainable consumption nor any recommendations for more ethical approaches to consuming animal products.

Animals are living, sentient beings thus it is vital their needs are considered as part of a cost benefit analysis on sustainability. When discussing the use of animals, we need to consider not just biological sustainability but if and how we can ethically use these resources.

Hong Kong's impact - high meat and fish consumption, live import and wet markets

The overwhelming majority of Hong Kong's meat comes from intensive factory farming. In 2016, Hong Kong ranks in the world's top 10 importers of beef, chicken and pork¹. Animal based food products often consume more resources than plant based food products.

Many of the animals consumed as food in Hong Kong are raised in China and transported over long distances before being imported for slaughter - increasing resource utilisation as well as concerns over animal welfare. China currently has no laws that protect the welfare of

¹ United States Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service (2016, October). Livestock and Poultry: World Markets and Trade. Retrieved from http://apps.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/circulars/livestock_poultry.pdf



food animals whilst being raised on farms or during transport. Slaughtering food animals in well run, regulated facilities close to where they are raised is an important element in sustainable consumption of food animals, as is the sourcing of local food supplies and indeed choosing more non animal based food products in the first place.

Thus, Hong Kong residents need to be aware of the many environmental and animal welfare issues related to farming and food animals in order to make more informed, sustainable choices.

Human health and animal welfare

Factory farming is synonymous with overcrowding and cruel techniques to enable such large numbers of animals (that would not usually live in such high densities), to be kept together until slaughter.

In 1979, the Farm Animal Welfare Council coined the "5 freedoms" to communicate in simple and understandable terms the concept of animal welfare to the public.²

1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
2. Freedom from Discomfort - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
5. Freedom from Fear and Distress - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

However, these freedoms can seldom be achieved in intense, factory farming conditions. Rearing animals in large numbers in high densities causes chronic stress and suffering and can also result in the rapid spread of disease.

Factory farming often results in the higher use of antibiotics and other drugs to prevent the spread of disease and/or to boost growth and production. However, constant use and misuse of antibiotics to kill bacteria results in them evolving quickly to become more and more resistant. These resistant bacteria eventually become widespread causing problems for the human population too.

Antibiotic resistant bacteria have been directly linked to the rampant use of antibiotics in factory farming.³ In 2015, the World Health Organisation (WHO) recognised anti-microbial

² Farm Animal Welfare Council (2009). The origins of the Five Freedoms. Retrieved from <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121007104210/http://www.fawc.org.uk/freedoms.htm>

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014). Anti-biotic Resistance Threats in the United States, 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/threat-report-2013/>



resistance, including antibiotic resistance as a high priority and developed a global action plan.⁴

Wet markets and disease outbreaks

Besides fundamentally contributing to the poor welfare of animals kept there, wet markets unnecessarily allow the close contact between different species of animals reared and kept under many different systems and locations. This type of close contact between humans and different animals leads to an increased risk of zoonotic disease transfer and novel disease outbreaks, such as the multiple Avian Influenza outbreaks witnessed in Hong Kong.

Currently, substantial additional resources are spent on disease surveillance, monitoring and management of wet markets and shops that hold live food animals for sale and consumption. Disease outbreaks linked to the live poultry trade also result in the culling of animals (wasting food) and may have a significant impact on human health.

Environmental health

Factory farming consumes large amounts of resources and is a major source of pollution in many agricultural countries. The effect of factory farming on the environment is well documented.^{5, 6} In 2006, the United Nations announced that cattle farming produced more greenhouse gases than driving cars.⁷ The immense volumes of animal waste are a well known pollutant in many countries, rendering waterways unusable.

In China, where Hong Kong imports most of its pork and chicken from, agriculture consumes 63% of national water resources. Farming also accounts for 50% of China's water pollution from fertiliser run off and livestock waste.⁸ China's rapid growth in meat production has had severe consequences⁹ for countries that supply it with animal feed, where large tracts of biodiverse-rich land is cleared for monoculture, something which is alluded to in page 5 of the consultation document.

⁴ World Health Organisation (2016, October). Antibiotic Resistance Fact Sheet. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/antibiotic-resistance/en/>

⁵ Pew Charitable Trusts and John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (2008). Putting Meat on the Table: Industrial Farm Animal Production in America. Retrieved from http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/assets/2008/pcifap_exec-summary.pdf

⁶ Food and Agriculture Organisation (2006). Livestock's Long Shadow – Environmental Issues and Options. Retrieved from <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/a0701e/a0701e.pdf>

⁷ United Nations (2006). Rearing cattle produces more greenhouse gases than driving cars, UN warns. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?newsID=20772&CR1=warning#.WCA0nS196Um>

⁸ Chan, WS and Z. Knight (2014, March) No water, no food. Ensuring food safety and food security in China. Retrieved from <http://chinawaterrisk.org/notices/hsbc-no-water-no-food-ensuring-food-safety-security/>

⁹ Sharma, S (2014, February 17). The Need for Feed: China's Demand for Industrialized Meat and its Impacts. <http://www.iatp.org/documents/the-need-for-feed-china%E2%80%99s-demand-for-industrialized-meat-and-its-impacts>



Pets, Medicine and Clothes

Hong Kong consumes and uses animals in many other ways – pets, medicine and clothes and fashion to name a few. In particular, Hong Kong imports more than a million exotic animals annually, including many endangered species. Hong Kong is a major player in the wildlife trade and wild populations locally and overseas are seriously affected by the capture and trade of these animals.¹⁰

In conclusion, the SPCA HK would like to see the scope of the discussion broadened to include the following:

1. The consumption of animals and their welfare should be included in policy discussions, awareness and education efforts about sustainability.
2. Information is key for consumers to make decisions about sustainability.
 - Information should be easy to find e.g. clear labeling and transparency regarding source of animals, distance travelled and mode of production and slaughter. This should extend to all animal derived products.
 - Other accredited labeling systems regarding animal welfare should be considered for inclusion.
 - Labelling should not just be on the product but also at shelf level to enable consumers to make an informed choice.
 - There should be an official system that clearly denotes what each label means, which have been audited/ received third party verification or have a legal or regulated definition. A public portal that list labels and answer questions from the public or provides links to relevant bodies who can answer these questions would be helpful.
3. Regular opportunities for engagement and collaboration between the government, NGOs and the private sector.
 - Fostering close working relationships between the government, the business sector and NGOs working in these fields will encourage a deeper, sustainable engagement that is more likely to lead to meaningful action

This could be in terms of regular industry events/expos or fairs/workshops and/or other partnerships which bring together interested parties who deal with issues with consumption.
4. Hong Kong's live food animal supply chain should be reviewed and numbers dramatically reduced and there should be better regulation and legislation to protect food animals.
 - Live import for slaughter should be halted immediately with a switch to the importation of chilled or frozen products.

¹⁰ ADM Capital et al (2015, December). Wildlife Trade: Is Hong Kong Doing Enough? Retrieved from https://www.sPCA.org.hk/images/PDF/Welfare/Wildlife%20trade/2016_0503_WildlifeCrimeReportENG.pdf



- Only Hong Kong reared food animals should be slaughtered in Hong Kong and be part of the 'warm' meat supply (if this practice continues).
Keeping live food animals (of all species) in wet markets, specialist shops, supermarkets and restaurants for later slaughter should be abolished.

Should you have any enquiries in relation to this submission please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED] or by email: [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Fiona Woodhouse'.

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(electronically)