

Legco Meeting Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2016

The Hong Kong Veterinary Association and the China (Hong Kong) Veterinary Association support the amendments under CAP 139B proposed by the AFCD.

The veterinary profession sees the impact of many things on the welfare of animals and the direct consequences of the way the Hong Kong pet trade operates. Pedigree dogs are very popular, not just in Hong Kong but world-wide. Currently there is insufficient protection for the Hong Kong public and the pedigree puppies purchased by them. Infectious diseases can be seen in animals presented at veterinary clinics often resulting from being housed under poor welfare conditions. Puppies can be poorly fed, increasing their likelihood of succumbing to disease and death.

Puppies have been seen suffering from abnormalities and deformities, linked to poor breeding practices, which may have lifelong consequences.

These animal welfare issues lead to human welfare issues owing to the emotional stress placed on pet owners should their pets pass away or should difficult life and death decisions need to be made. These issues occur across all species in the pet trade.

This is why the Hong Kong Veterinary Association and the China (Hong Kong) Veterinary Association supports the proposed amendments which are long overdue and would be a valuable step in improving the practices of the dog trade. The licensing of all breeders closes loopholes and will put in place a system that regulates all breeders and requires them to meet certain standards. It will create a framework that should help improve transparency and give additional impetus to breeders to improve their breed planning and health screening.

This legislation provides a simple licensing system which does not change the legal status of dog breeding in Hong Kong and certainly will not encourage more people to be involved once standards are imposed. Pedigree dogs are popular

and banning the breeding of them would only result in illegal breeding where there would be no control over standards, which it is feared will open the door to widespread welfare abuses and a worsening of the current situation. We have confidence that the AFCD will meet the challenge of enforcing the new legislation.

There should be no further delay in implementing the amendments which would then allow work to start on better protecting the other species traded in Hong Kong.