



AVA, working with animal welfare groups and veterinarians, to roll out five-year programme on the sterilisation of stray dogs to manage the stray population

21 December 2017: The Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA), working closely with animal welfare groups (AWGs) and veterinarians, will be embarking on a five-year Trap-Neuter-Release-Manage (TNRM) programme to manage the stray dog population in Singapore. The programme is slated to start in the second half of 2018, with support from animal welfare groups.

Science-based, humane method to manage stray dogs

2 Stray dogs live in harsh and difficult conditions. They are constantly exposed to the elements and face various hazards like traffic, starvation and disease. Stray dogs who return to their feral instincts can potentially pose a danger to the public, especially when in packs. Stray dogs are also a potential reservoir of disease like rabies.

3 The TNRM programme is a humane and science-based method to reduce the stray dog population in Singapore. This will be done by humanely catching stray dogs and sterilising them. Efforts will be made to rehome as many of the sterilised animals as possible. Those that are unable to be rehomed will be released at suitable locations to live out their lives naturally. The target is to sterilise more than 70% of the stray dogs in Singapore within five years. Based on scientific literature and mathematical modelling, a sustained sterilisation rate of 70% or more is necessary to stabilise a stray dog population, before it begins to come down.

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4 Ms Jessica Kwok, Group Director of AVA's Animal Management Group, said: "Through the sterilisation of stray dogs nationwide, we hope to find a humane and sustainable solution to manage stray dogs. The TNRM programme will be complemented by regulation of the pet industry to enhance traceability of dogs, control over import and export of pet dogs, licensing of pet dogs at source, and tough penalties on pet abandonment. We would also like to assure the public that during the implementation of this programme, AVA will continue to safeguard public health and safety."

Collaboration with AWGs

5 This programme is strongly supported by several AWGs and the veterinary community. Since June 2017, AVA has been engaging the AWG community as well as veterinarians to seek feedback and suggestions on the initiative. The response has been positive with 11 AWGs currently committed to participate in the programme. These AWGs will play a crucial supportive and facilitative role in the implementation of this programme. For example, they will help to galvanise stray feeders and volunteers. Some AWGs have also been doing their sterilisation programmes in localised areas for many years. Their dedication and expertise will be incorporated into this nationwide approach.

6 "This nationwide TNRM effort is a game changer for street dogs in Singapore and we are thrilled that this is happening. We are very pleased to see so many stakeholders, including the government, animal welfare groups and veterinarians, coming together with a shared vision and approach to humanely reduce the street dog population." said Dr Jaipal Singh Gill, Executive Director of Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).

7 Dr Siew Tuck Wah, President of SOSD, also expressed support for the programme. "In Singapore, various animal welfare groups have carried out sterilisation of stray dogs over the past 30 years, but there has not been a concerted, large scale

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effort such as this one before. We believe that this will be the turning point for stray animal management in Singapore. This effort also proves that our society is evolving into a more compassionate, kinder one which cares not only for its human residents but for its animals as well. We cannot be more excited and more grateful for this initiative!", Dr Siew said.

8 The success of the TNRM programme would depend very much on dedicated AWG volunteers like Lee Chuen Ling. Chuen Ling, a lawyer by training, dedicated three years of her time to volunteer full time with SOSD, and has been leading groups of volunteers to trap, neuter, release and manage stray dogs. Under her charge, SOSD has successfully sterilised dogs on Pulau Ubin as part of the Ubin Project.

9 AVA will continue to work closely with the relevant stakeholders in the coming months to fine-tune the implementation details of the TNRM programme. AWGs or members of the public who wish to participate in the programme can contact AVA at 1800 476 1600.

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List of AWGs participating in AVA's TNRM programme

1. Action for Singapore Dogs
2. Animal Lovers League
3. Causes for Animals
4. Exclusively Mongrels
5. Mercylight
6. OSCAS
7. Noah's Ark CARES
8. Purely Adoptions
9. SOSD
10. SPCA
11. Voices for Animals

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