

ST, 20/08, pA24

[Reply] Balanced management of stray cat population

Recently, there have been several letters on the feeding of stray cats.

2 The Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) takes a balanced approach in managing stray cats. Just as the letter writers expressed different views, public opinion on stray cat management is also divided. There are members of the public who are bothered by stray cat nuisance and irresponsible feeding of strays, and hence advocate a ban on the feeding of strays and their removal from the streets. There are also others, who advocate sterilisation and responsible management of strays as a humane way to manage the stray cat population. AVA takes into consideration these diverse views and ensures that the control measures we implement can benefit the society at large.

3 Members of the public should not feed strays irresponsibly. While the feeding of stray animals is well intended, irresponsible feeding becomes an offence when it causes littering of the environment. The public may contact AVA to provide feedback on irresponsible stray feeding at [1800 476 1600](tel:18004761600).

4 Animal lovers should also be mindful that feeding strays without getting them sterilised will cause them to proliferate and exacerbate the stray situation. The efforts of animal lovers who devote their time and resources to sterilise and care for community cats can be supported as long as they do so responsibly.

5 We have observed that in areas where sterilised stray cats are part of the community, the stray cat population has decreased. Thus, AVA has been working with the Cat Welfare Society (CWS) to promote responsible pet ownership and explore feasible ways of managing the stray animal population. For example, AVA is working with CWS and their volunteers through AVA's Stray Cat Sterilisation Programme. Under this program, an agreed number of sterilised cats are returned to the neighbourhood where they are responsibly managed by caregivers. CWS also assists, where possible, in community mediation related to cat issues.

6 The stray cat issue is a complex problem with no quick fix. Tackling it requires the collective effort of animal welfare groups, caregivers, as well as the community. AVA will continue with its public education efforts to inculcate responsible pet ownership to improve animal welfare, as well as to create a harmonious living environment for all. However, education is a long term process, and a little tolerance and understanding on the part of everyone goes a long way.

Dr Wong Hon Mun
Director, Agri Establishment Regulation
for Chief Executive Officer
Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority

Original letters
ST Forum, 01/08

[Letter] For cat's sake, act against irresponsible feeding

For cat's sake, act against irresponsible feeding

Published on
Aug 01, 2012



0

f Share

0

Tweet

0

in Share



Purchase this
article for
replication

PhotoBank
Buy SPH
photos



If you love cats, care for them responsibly, like Mr Suhaimi (above), says letter writer Lee Chiu San. -- ST PHOTO: LIM YAOHUI FOR THE STRAITS TIMES

LAST Friday's article ("Role model to his kids and community") revealed that Cathay Organisation Holdings CEO Suhaimi Rafdi, who was named the latest Berita Harian Achiever of the Year, is a role model not only for his family and community, but also for responsible pet owners.

In a room in his house, Mr Suhaimi provides a home for the stray cats that he rescues. His is an example that itinerant cat feeders should do well to emulate, and the Ministry of National Development should endorse.

Having lived with pet cats for 60 years, and as I am now sharing my home with former strays, I would rather throw the book at itinerant cat feeders than cull stray cats. At pet shops, I always see them buying cat food. Never have I seen them buying cat litter, something which takes up about a quarter of my cat-care budget.

ST Online, 04/08

[Letter] Cat feeders are the problem

I AGREE with Mr Lee Chiu San that we should throw the book at itinerant cat feeders rather than cull stray cats ("For cat's sake, act against irresponsible feeding").

I live in St Patrick's Garden, home to many stray cats because of an elderly neighbour who feeds them twice a day, every day.

Over my three-year stay here, cats of all stripes have visited, kittens have been born, and one or two bold ones have taken to milling about the staircase landings, practically forcing ground-floor residents to shut their doors throughout the day for fear of cats stealing into their homes to nap on the couch or swipe a snack from the coffee table.

Feeders of stray cats act as if their feline charges are theirs, but retort that "these are not my cats" when you tell them kindly not to feed them. So spaying them is really none of their business either.

It seems that the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority cannot offer much help either.

When I approached it in April on this matter, all it said was that feeding cats is not illegal.

The question, though, is how can it help in getting cat lovers like my neighbour to do the right thing? And what exactly is the right thing - spay the cats, or stop feeding them entirely?

- **Vivienne Yeo (Ms)**

ST Online, 04/08

[Letter] Key lies in responsible feeding

I HAVE been a cat caregiver for more than 10 years in the HDB estate where I live ("For cat's sake, act against irresponsible feeding" by Mr Lee Chiu San).

Mr Lee seems to be against the feeding of stray cats, but there are advantages to responsible feeding - the cats will not annoy residents by rummaging in dustbins and by going into homes to steal food.

Responsible feeding is part of the management of stray cats, which includes sterilisation. Sterilisation will reduce the population of cats over time.

I agree with Mr Lee that cats should be allowed in HDB flats, with owners exercising responsible ownership.

- **Dr Tan Chek Wee**

ST Online, 16/08

[Letter] Irresponsible pet owners deserve equally stiff penalties

Irresponsible pet owners deserve equally stiff penalties

Published on
Aug 16, 2012



0

f Share

0

Tweet

0

in Share



Purchase this
article for
replication

THE call by animal lovers to impose stiffer penalties on animal abusers should be considered together with the issue of irresponsible pet lovers ("Animal lovers call for stiffer penalties"; Monday). The latter deserve equally stiff penalties.

For instance, my neighbour's cat, after being fed outside the home, enters my house regularly to leave its droppings. It once destroyed my sofa and even defaecated on my bed.

I had to cover all possible entry points with wire mesh, and the cat is now able to enter only my backyard, where there is no roof.

When I complained to my neighbour, she replied that as she has a dog in her house, she must feed her cat outside, which is also possibly why her cat is perpetually roaming around the neighbourhood.

She even shrugged off my feedback, saying that is how cats behave.

Worse, there is a woman in my neighbourhood who feeds stray cats nightly, dirtying pavements and attracting rodents and birds.

So aren't my rights against irresponsible animal lovers being ignored?

Yang Ying Qing