

Shirley Hughes

From: Marie Lambden
Sent: 26 January 2015 13:27
To: Shirley Hughes
Subject: FW: Submission to Tynwald Select Committee on Animal Welfare
Attachments: Tynwald Select Committee on Animal Welfare January 2015.doc

Animal Welfare
Submissions
Acknowledgement informing about publication.

Thank you.
Marie

From: Joanne [<mailto:animallover@mcb.net>]
Sent: 23 January 2015 00:53
To: Marie Lambden
Cc: kate.beecroft@gov.im; Kate Beecroft; brenda_cannellmhk@manx.net; David Cretney
Subject: Submission to Tynwald Select Committee on Animal Welfare

Dear Mrs Lambden

Please find attached a submission to the Tynwald Select Committee on Animal Welfare, which we would be grateful if you could bring to the attention of Mrs K Beecroft MHK; Mrs B Cannell MHK and Mr D Cretney MHK at your earliest convenience.

With thanks and best regards,

Mr & Mrs A & MM Hetherington & family



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23 January 2015

Mrs M Lambden
Third Clerk of Tynwald
Tynwald Select Committee on Animal Welfare
Legislative Buildings
Douglas
Isle of Man
IM1 3PW

Dear Mrs Lambden

Submission of views to Mrs K Beecroft MHK (Chair); Mrs B Cannell MHK and Mr D Cretney MHK - Tynwald Select Committee on Animal Welfare

In England and Wales, prior to the UK's Animal Welfare Act 2006 animal welfare law was largely reactive and action could only be taken once an animal had suffered unnecessarily. Sadly, on the Isle of Man, our animals face the same problems as those in the UK before the Animal Welfare Act was introduced. People who are responsible for animals, whether they are pet owners; farmers; livestock transporters to the meat plant; meat plant workers; boarding kennel / cattery owners; pet shop workers; must have a legal duty of care to those animals.

The Isle of Man must make the necessary legislative changes to enable crucial early interventions to ensure the prevention of cruelty and suffering, rather than simply reacting to it when the damage has already been done, and our legislation should protect pet; domestic; wild; working and captive animals.

In the UK, the RSPCA warmly welcomed the Animal Welfare Act 2006 which received Royal Assent on 8 November 2006 and came into force in England and Wales in 2007. The Animal Welfare Act updated the offences for cruelty to animals but crucially introduced for the first time for domestic animal legislation a new concept – the welfare offence.

The welfare offence requires owners of and people responsible for animals to take reasonable steps to ensure their animals' welfare needs are met. The welfare needs are

based on the "Five Freedoms" which widely used and recognised in academic animal welfare research and legislation. Animals' needs include:

- A need for a suitable environment,
- A need for a suitable diet,
- A need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns,
- Any need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals, and
- A need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

These are not unreasonable requirements, and if we were to introduce this concept on the Isle of Man we would see a major step forward in animal welfare protection. At present, action can only be taken once an animal has suffered unnecessarily. However this new offence will mean that action can be taken at an earlier stage before the animal has suffered and thus potentially prevent the suffering from occurring in the first place. It will also act as an important educational tool and encourage prospective owners/carers of animals to think seriously about whether they can adequately care for an animal before they take that animal on.

In addition, the Isle of Man Government should consult upon and introduce a series of Codes of Practice to assist the public with understanding what commonly kept animals basic needs are. In the UK, it has been widely recognised and acknowledged that these Codes of Practice can only support improved animal welfare if they are concise and easy to understand by the public.

In the UK, there exists an Associate Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare (APGAW), a group of MPs and Lords who meet to discuss animal welfare matters; launches enquires and produce recommendations. The Isle of Man should have an equivalent group set up to support and consider all aspects of animal welfare and support the prescription of suitable standards of care and how such activities can be upheld legally.

An IoM equivalent of AGPAW could consider evidence from veterinary surgeons; animal welfare charities; animal health inspectors; farmers; meat plant workers; – all working together to improve animal welfare standards.

New legislation and Code of Practice could provide opportunities to improve (amongst other things):

- Welfare of animals at slaughter (e.g. Codes of Practice from the Humane Slaughter Association; CCTV at the meat plant);
- Welfare of laying hens (i.e. The EU's Welfare of Laying Hens Directive came into force in the EU in 2012, with a ban on the use of battery cages for laying hens – this law does not apply on the Isle of Man, which means we could be the only place in Europe where battery cages are still used);
- Linkage of Government-paid farming subsidies and compensations to good animal husbandry practices (e.g. not paying publicly-funded subsidies to those who neglect their animals or cause suffering);

- Support of export of animals "on the hook not on the hoof" (i.e. not live exports);
- Psychological welfare as well as physical welfare (i.e. it should not be acceptable to keep a dog on the basis that it is fed and watered if it is locked in a shed or cellar all day; or breed from a dog if the conditions for mother and puppies are not conducive to good welfare & socialization. Also, all captive animals should be provided with highly enriched environments to reduce the risk of stress and stereotypic behaviours which are common in captive animals which are not cared for);
- Tightening restrictions on people who breed litter after litter of puppies for financial gain with inadequate care for the mother or offspring;
- Supporting high standards of care in boarding kennels and catteries;
- Humane and welfare-friendly control of feral cat and uncontrolled farm cat populations to reduce the burden on animal charities such as the MSPCA and Mann Cat Sanctuary and also reduce the impact of predation on ground-nesting birds (e.g. by supporting spay / neutering campaigns);
- Promotion of the Isle of Man as a destination for the "compassionate traveler" which is a growing sector within global tourism.

One of the Isle of Man Government's three key strategic aims is to "Protect the vulnerable", which is a progressive, fair and laudable policy, and we all should be proud to support. However, let us not forget that in addition to their being vulnerable people, there are also many vulnerable animals on the Island. These animals are facing pain, abuse, neglect, hunger and fear on a daily basis, and are vulnerable because their fates lie in the hands of people who do not care about their welfare, and yet are responsible for it.

As a final comment, the Isle of Man should also consider this matter in the context of its international reputation. Let us not forget the words of Gandhi when he said "The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated". The Isle of Man is a great nation, but it could be made even greater if its sentient beings were afforded better protection from abuse and cruelty, which would reflect a compassionate and progressive society.

When it comes to matters of animal welfare, it is not what we say or how we feel that matters - it is what we do.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this submission.

With kind regards,

Mr & Mrs A & M M Hetherington & family