




## THE REVIEW OF HONG KONG'S ANIMAL WELFARE LAWS

A Partnership between  
HKU Faculty of Law  
and  
Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to  
Animals (HK)




## Methodology

- Field research by veterinarians
- Consultation with local stakeholders:
  - Government: AFCD, FEHD, Police
  - Users: Farmers, Traders, WWF (HK), Kadoorie Farm, Animal Houses, Vets
- Review of welfare laws of EU member states, USA, Australia, NZ, Singapore and Taiwan



## Role of the OIE (World Health Organization for Animals)

- China is an OIE member country
- HK considers itself bound
- Since 2002, the OIE has been providing recommendations for **positive** animal welfare (farming, transport, slaughter)
- International recognition of the link between animal health and animal welfare



## Outdated Hong Kong Legislation

- HK has not significantly changed its law since it was introduced in 1935
- No **duty of care** to animals
- SPCA has succeeded in banning some of the worst practices but 20 years of law reform efforts have failed to make significant headway




### The current situation in Hong Kong

Only overt cruelty can be punished

Neglect is not a criminal act

Animals in danger cannot be assisted






### Ineffective prosecutions

No change to magistrates' sentencing practices


Few prosecutions

Low average sentences passed

### Pet Breeders

- Hobby breeders are exempt from licensing requirements (no checks, at all, on animal welfare)
- There are only 2 licensed breeders in HK
- SPCA Sick Puppy Survey Results





### Pet Shops

Inadequate licensing conditions

Out of date enclosure standards

Failure to recognize welfare needs






### Slaughter

Slaughterhouse legislation intended to protect food animals is out of date and ineffective

The sheer scale of the numbers of animals involved makes this a significant concern



### On Farm welfare

- No welfare laws for majority of farm animals (pigs and chickens)
- No enclosure requirements and no stocking density in cages
- No regulations to require humane euthanasia
- Sick and injured animals are sold for slaughter or abandoned to die



### Wet markets

Inadequate transport, enclosure and slaughter regulations

Failure to meet OIE requirements



### Animals in Research

- Only regulate experiments “calculated to cause pain”
- Voluntary Animal Ethics Committees (linked to RGC funding)
- No animal welfare officer required
- DOH medics not aware of research practices
- No requirement to specify humane endpoints

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE CONFERENCE

## Results of HKU/SPCA Review

- Leg Co members calling for Animal Friendly policy
- AFCD developing Codes for Pets
- Department of Justice reviewing sentences, priority cases
- Police- CID investigations
- Increased public awareness through media coverage

