

Govt to spend RM80m to boost animal welfare

KUALA LUMPUR: The government will spend RM80 million to improve animal welfare through its National Animal Welfare Strategic Plan 2012-2020 (NAWSP).

Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Noh Omar said that up to RM35 million had been allocated for the establishment of the Centre of Animal Welfare Excellence (COE) at Universiti Putra Malaysia next year.

He said interest in animal welfare from the media, government and non-governmental organisations continued to grow.

“The plan aims to cultivate responsible animal ownership and the government will strengthen aspects of education and training in animal welfare.

“At the same time, the government will strive to improve animal handlers through training and establishing standard operating procedures.”

He said this at the launch of the 3rd World Organisation for Animal Health Conference on Animal Welfare here.

Spearheaded by the Department of Veterinary Services, the implementation of the NAWSP is divided into three strategies: legislation, awareness and research.

Amendments to the Animal Act 1953, which deals with animal import, export and quarantine, are being drafted.

Along side the amendments, the ministry is pushing for more recognition of animal welfare through its Animal Welfare Act 2012.

“We are serious in our efforts to protect animals. The draft for the Animal Welfare Act 2012 will be tabled at Parliament next year.”

He said the ministry was looking at establishing an Animal Welfare Council under the Animal Act 1953, chaired by the minister to oversee and evaluate its effectiveness.

“Under NAWSP’s second strategy, the government will increase its efforts to spread awareness of animal welfare in educational centres.”

The third strategy deals with COE and will generate more international conferences, researches and meetings in Malaysia.

Noh said he was confident Malaysia could withstand any food crisis as global padi yields were increasing each year.