

SERDANG: The Animal Welfare Bill is ready to be tabled in Parliament next year.

Deputy Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Chua Tee Yong said based on the latest feedback, seven new regulations would be added to the Bill, including harsher penalties for repeat animal abusers.

While the earlier draft included a provision to increase the penalty for those convicted of animal cru-

Animal abusers to face harsher penalties

elty to a maximum RM100,000 fine and up to three years' prison, repeat offenders could now face a RM200,000 fine and a minimum three months' prison.

Under the Animal Act, the maximum fine is only RM200.

Another suggestion was that shelters be provided to home animals in the event their owners do

not have licences or have their licences revoked, he told reporters yesterday, after closing the World Organisation for Animal Health's (OIE) third Global Conference on Animal Welfare.

Chua said the draft, which was put online on Aug 31 to get feedback from the public, had received 537 responses with another 703

collected by the Veterinary Services Department.

Based on the responses, seven new suggestions by the public were added to the Bill.

He said the country would also set a Centre of Excellence for animal welfare in Universiti Putra Malaysia.

The centre would act as a

research hub for animal welfare with other OIE member countries.

During the conference, the ministry also launched the National Strategic Plan for Animal Welfare.

The plan will be a guideline to raise animal welfare standards to be on par with other developed nations by 2020 and is estimated to cost the Government RM80mil over the next eight years.