

## **Control of Rabies in Pets**

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Stray dogs are a big problem in Taiwan. Most of the stray dogs were abandoned by their owners, and local governments have devoted efforts to address this issue.

According to sample survey conducted by the COA in 1999, the number of stray dogs has declined in densely populated areas, but increased in the remote townships and mountainous areas.

Stray dogs often gather together in packs, terrorizing neighborhoods; recently, cases of rabies in dogs have been identified.

Council of Agriculture initiated a new program to address the stray dog issue. This program focuses on reinforcing owners' responsibility, encouraging pets adoptions, and reducing the number of stray dogs in rural areas. This program enhances animal welfare, ensures public safety and improves the quality of the environment.

This program has been launched in rural townships and mountainous areas this year (2014). For the safety of citizens, livestock, and stray dogs, manpower and budget should be provisioned by the local government to ensure the delivery of program.

Few featured efforts of the program: vaccinate dogs (whether they are stray or not), implant microchips to register dogs, and neuter/spay dogs. The goal is to reduce the stray dog breeding problem.

Since the majority of stray dogs were abandoned by pet owners, to end the abandonment, COA focuses on the Animal Protection Act (APA) amendments, which outlines the responsibilities of owners. The current draft also includes amendments of pet food safety and the use of human drugs in dogs and cats to ensure the animals' welfare.

Another effort is to develop animal shelters to house stray dogs and promote adoption. Animal shelters will work with veterinarians' and pet service groups to care for the dogs, neuter/spay them, and treat their diseases, so the dogs can be adopted.

Campaign events were organized to emphasize animal's rights, humane treatment, and encourage adoption before purchase.

The progressiveness of animal protection or animal welfare can be ensured from this program, and the safety and health of the community can be assured when animal welfare is secured.

(Data Source: Council of Agriculture)

Date submitted: February 24, 2014

Reviewed, edited and uploaded: February 25, 2014