

8 .Welfare and Proper Management of Animals

The Ministry of the Environment aims at raising a spirit for animal welfare among people and preventing animals from doing harm to humans, based on the "Act on Welfare and Management of Animals". So the ministry is putting efforts into raising public awareness of welfare and proper management of animals, and preventing abandonment of animals or cruelty towards them, and is promoting such measures as regulations on animal handling business, measures for preservation of the living environment, measures to prevent animals from causing infringement on the life of humans, and measures to ensure responsibilities of owners and possessors of animals. Moreover, in June, 2008, the "Law for Ensuring the Safety of Pet Food" was passed to help maintain the health of pet animals and promote protection and welfare of pet animals.

Act on Welfare and Management of Animals

The "Act on Welfare and Management of Animals" provides for appropriate treatment and management of animals.

Fundamental Principle

The guiding principle underlying this law is that all people should recognize and respect the lives of animals. All people should not only refrain from abusing animals, but also treat animals with sound knowledge of their behavior, in order to realize a society in which people and animals can live together comfortably.

Responsibilities of Animal Owners

The owners of animals are obliged to maintain the health and safety of animals, and be responsible for the animal's behaviors to prevent harm and trouble to other people. Owners shall try to show their ownership of animals in appropriate ways. They are also expected to have correct knowledge of infectious diseases related to animals.

Regulations for Animal Handling Business Operators

Those who sell, keep, lend, train or display animals as a business shall register to the governor of the prefecture concerned. Governors are authorized to give recommendations or orders to business owners if there are problems with their facilities and/or treatment of animals. Governors have closedown orders on a vicious supplier.

Measures Pertaining to Preservation of The Living Environment

When one keeps many animals and it causes negative impacts on the living environment of his/her neighborhood, the governor of the prefecture may recommend or order the owner to take necessary remedial measures.

Restriction on The Care and Keeping of Specified Animals (Dangerous Animals)

Those who intend to keep animals categorized by the government as dangerous animals are required to obtain a permission of the prefectural governor. The owners of the specified animals have to make sure proper management of their pet animals by using microchips for ownership identification and making their feeding facilities strong enough to prevent the animals from escaping.

Efforts by The Government and Municipalities

So that a deeper interest in and better understanding of the welfare of animals and appropriate ways of keeping animals can take firm root in society, one week from 20 to 26 September of each year is designated as "Be Kind to Animals Week". The national and local authorities hold events for this purpose. Furthermore, in order to promote measures for welfare and management of animals comprehensively, the Minister of the Environment formulates basic guidelines and then prefectural governors draw up plans for promoting measures. The governors and local organizations concerned may appoint Animal Welfare Promoters and may also organize councils of other parties to support the activities of Animal Welfare Promoters.

Penal Provisions

There are penal provisions for such offenses as killing pets with no reasons, abandoning them and abusing them.

(*) The term "protected animals" involves cattle, horses, pigs, sheep, goats, dogs, cats, domestic rabbits, chickens, domestic pigeons, domestic ducks and other mammals, birds and reptiles that people possess.



Law for Ensuring the Safety of Pet Food

To prevent damage to pet animal health from pet food and ensure the safety of pet animals, the "Law for Ensuring the Safety of Pet Food" was established in June, 2008 (effective June, 2009). This law sets the standards and specifications for pet food for dogs and cats, and prohibits producing, importing and selling pet food that falls short of these standards and specifications and contains harmful ingredients. If any problems arise, the government may order the makers who caused the problems to recall their products and dispose of them. The law provides for penal provisions against malicious offenders.