

Gov't to regulate local vets

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LAWMAKER Kwan Tsui Hang revealed that the Macau government is in the process of drafting legislation to regulate veterinarians practicing in Macau. She also revealed that it is difficult to guarantee whether the animal protection bill will be passed in the first half of 2015.

Ms Kwan is the president of the Legislative Assembly (AL) First Standing Committee, which continued to discuss the animal protection legislation in a meeting yesterday. During a post-meeting press conference, Kwan said that her committee colleagues have asked the government about the regulation of local vets.

"We have talked about [regulating vets] today. The government has already replied that they are currently drafting [the legislation]. But it is definite that the [regulation] will come after the legislation on animal protection," she said, adding that the regulation has to be legislated as a law instead of through administrative decree because it involves



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the regulation of a profession.

Apart from local vets, Kwan also mentioned regulations on pet stores. She said that Macau is still lacking supervision on the sale of pets, including

the demand for proof of origin of the animals. "The animal protection legislation needs these supplementary laws as soon as it is passed. Now that the government still cannot

give us that legislation, we only hope that it will not take years to propose those bills," she said.

As for discussion on the animal protection bill, Kwan said that lawmakers and government officials have debated 15 of the draft articles contained within the proposed legislation, regarding the catching and keeping of wild animals. Lawmakers suggested that the government should come up with a list of wild animals. They are also concerned that some wild creatures might approach residents and could even live in the residential apartments.

While addressing these concerns, the administration stated that, after the bill is passed, the responsibility will rest on residents to notify the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau once they spot wild animals in their apartments. Nevertheless, residents can still keep wild animals with the approval of the IACM. The authorities have also promised to provide a list of endangered species in the future.

Furthermore, lawmakers

have discussed the proposed Article 16, which regulates animals for commercial and recreational use, including those that are exhibited in commercial venues for sale. They pointed out that there are animals in some casinos in Macau that are exhibited but not for purchase, which also concerns the licensing by IACM under Article 16. AL members think this will create excessive administrative hurdles and the government later agreed to exclude animals in commercial venues kept solely for exhibition from special licensing.

In terms of the progress of the legislation, Kwan said that the committee has already endeavoured to discuss the bill at least once a week. However, she believes that various events, including Chinese New Year in February and the Policy Address by the Chief Executive in March will prevent committee members from meeting as frequently as they currently are. As a result, she said that it is difficult to promise that the animal protection bill will be passed by the AL in the first half of the year. Instead, she said that they will strive to finish the debate on the bill before the AL goes on Summer break in mid August.

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