

AVA

September 2004

The authority for food safety and animal and plant health

vision



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Food Safety Day dons lab coats



The new Veterinary Public Health Centre was officially launched by Mr Mah Bow Tan, Minister for National Development (second from left) on 9 July 2004.



Mr Mah Bow Tan tours the laboratory facilities at the Veterinary Public Health Centre.

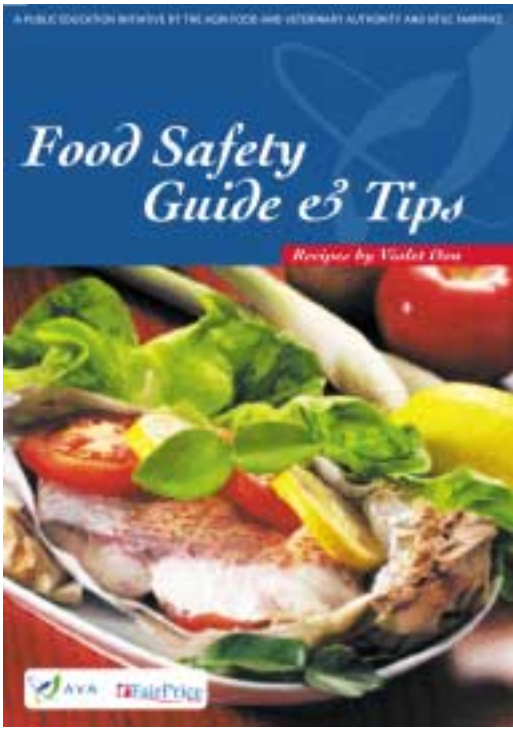
Food Safety Day saw the unveiling of the new Veterinary Public Health Centre and Food Safety Night gave due recognition to members of the food industry for their food safety efforts.

Singapore's second Food Safety Day on 9 July 2004 saw participants donning lab coats and talking high-tech. In conjunction with Food Safety Day 2004, AVA's new cutting-edge facility for food safety, the Veterinary Public Health Centre (VPHC), was officially opened by Minister for National Development, Mr Mah Bow Tan.

High-tech boost for food safety testing

The \$32 million, 9,227 sq m state-of-the-art facility which forms the cornerstone of AVA's integrated food safety system, houses equipment worth more than \$30 million, for food testing. From a spiral plater which can rapidly count bacteria using laser beams in less than 30 seconds to a highly efficient fume exhaust system that effectively draws away gases generated in the laboratory, the new facility not only hastens the analysis process but provides a conducive and safe environment for laboratory work.

Over 900,000 tests are conducted annually by VPHC's dedicated professionals on samples of imported and locally-produced food products to ensure that the food is safe for consumption. The new VPHC also has a Biosafety Level 3 facility to handle highly hazardous organisms and toxins in food. This enhances AVA's capability to deal with and respond to potential food biosecurity incidents.



Free Food Safety Guides were distributed to the public through the STREATS newspaper and the NTUC Fairprice supermarkets.



Mr Mah Bow Tan gets up-close and personal with the high-tech laboratory equipment at the Veterinary Public Health Centre.

Consumer's role in food safety

Emphasising that food safety is not the sole responsibility of the Government but that the industry and consumers have a role to play, Mr Mah announced the theme for this year's Food Safety Day, 'Avoid Cross-Contamination'. "Some of us may not be aware that food borne illnesses are frequently the result of cross-contamination between raw and cooked foods," he elaborated.

Another highlight of Food Safety Day and an avenue to spread the food safety message was the distribution of a Food Safety Guide to members of the public. The result of a collaboration with one of last year's Food Safety Partner Award recipients, NTUC Fairprice, the guide came packed with food safety tips and tantalising recipes from celebrity chef Violet

Oon. The guide was made available to public through STREATS and NTUC Fairprice supermarkets.

Recognising industry's effort in food safety

Honouring the members of the food manufacturing industry who have consistently maintained high standards of food safety was the inaugural Food Safety Night held on the following day, 10 July 2004. Graced by the Minister of State for National Development, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, the event saw the presentation of Certificates of Commendation to food manufacturers who achieved excellence in food hygiene, sanitation and processing in 2002 and 2003. In addition, tokens of appreciation were given to Food Safety Partners for their efforts in food safety public education.



Recipients of the Certificate of Commendation for achieving excellence in food hygiene, sanitation and processing in 2002 and 2003 pose with Dr Vivian Balakrishnan (center).

Testing times - The history of VPHL

From a small set-up for testing meat, the Veterinary Public Health Centre has leapfrogged to become an internationally renowned food safety testing centre.

From humble beginnings to internationally renowned high-tech food testing facility sums up the Veterinary Public Health Laboratory's over 30-year history. Set-up in 1970 by AVA's fore-runner, the Primary Production Department, there was only a 180 sq m Chemistry and a 50 sq m Microbiology testing facility next to the old Jurong Abattoir at 51 Jalan Buroh, Jurong. It was headed by a Chemist who was assisted by four laboratory technicians and a laboratory attendant.

Under a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and with a US\$700,000.00 (approximately S\$1,188,800) funding grant, a Meat Technology Section focusing on Veterinary Public Health and meat technology activities was added in the early 1970s. Due to rising concern for pesticide residues in imported vegetables in the early 1980s, a Pesticide Residue Laboratory was set up with a Singapore government funding of S\$600,000.00, to enforce regulatory control of all locally produced and imported vegetables.

The Centre was further extended in 1983, under the ASEAN-Australia Economic Cooperation Programme (AAECP) to conduct training courses on laboratory meat safety and quality control for ASEAN countries. A Quality Assurance Section was also established at the same time in line with the Government campaign to promote the consumption of frozen pork.

The VPHL continued to upgrade and expand over the years to meet new food safety challenges, technological changes and consumer expectations. From using the most basic equipment, VPHL progressed to using some of the more sophisticated and sensitive equipment in laboratory food analyses, to detect contaminants down to minute levels. Information technology was incorporated in food testing and food inspection operational procedures in the early 1990s, to increase efficiency.

As the need for adequate and proper facilities became more pressing due to expansion in staff, equipment and requirement for more testing capabilities, the set-up of a new Veterinary Public Health Centre was proposed in 1996 to house the AVA's food testing and inspection operations. Construction took off in 2001 and in May 2003, the VPHL shifted to the new Centre.

Today, the new \$32 million, 9,227 sq m Centre is home to 70 staff and comprises eight cutting-edge laboratories including facilities for analyses on pesticide and drug residues, food borne toxins and contaminants, food nutrition and authenticity, as well as food microbiology. Armed with up-to-date facilities and capabilities, the Centre is well-poised to handle the nearly million tests on over 60,000 samples of imported and locally-produced food a year to ensure safe food for all.



Far from its humble beginnings, the Veterinary Public Health Laboratory now houses 8 high-tech laboratories.

VPHL - ASEAN Reference Laboratory for Pesticide Residues Analysis

In July 2004, the Pesticide Residue Branch (PRB) of the AVA's Veterinary Public Health Laboratory (VPHL) was endorsed as an ASEAN Reference Laboratory (ARL) for pesticide residue testing of food in ASEAN. This endorsement offers opportunities for VPHL to become a regional training hub and information centre for pesticide residue analyses and provide training and technical services on laboratory management and testing capabilities to the National Reference Laboratories (NRL) and other laboratories in ASEAN member countries. Other benefits include:

- Facilitates links to the NRL of ASEAN member countries for food testing collaboration and sharing technical expertise for the benefit of all countries in the region.
- Facilitates link up with the European network of food testing laboratories to further build upon the analytical expertise and recognition accorded to VPHL and enhance technical co-operation in the long term.
- VPHL will act as the focal point for networking between ARLs, NRLs and EU Community Reference Laboratories (CRLs) for exchanging technical information and enhancing collaboration.

Swift test for bird flu virus



The Polymerase Chain Reaction test speeds up the diagnosis of H5 and H7 bird flu virus subtypes.

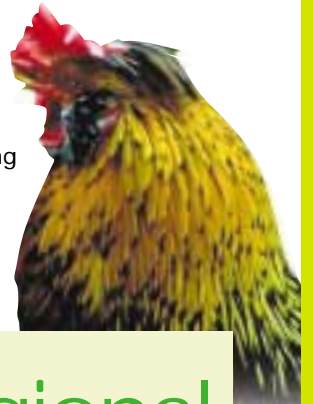
Adding to AVA's arsenal of weapons in the battle against bird flu is a new testing capability that can quickly diagnose the H5 and H7 virus subtypes (which are highly pathogenic to poultry and may also affect humans) of bird flu.

The diagnosis of these subtypes, which using traditional isolation techniques took up to three days to perform, can now be diagnosed accurately within seven hours using the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test.

The rapid diagnostic kit previously used which could only detect flu A viruses as a group is far surpassed by the new PCR technique that employs genetic screening to identify the presence of specific virus subtypes.

Once an H5 or H7 subtype of the bird flu virus is confirmed by the PCR test in any of the local poultry farms, the poultry in all the farms will be culled and safely disposed of.

Similarly, upon detection of H5 and H7 subtypes of the bird flu virus in import consignments, affected regions will be suspended from exporting live birds and poultry products to Singapore.



AVA plays host to regional forum on livestock

AVA played host to the 12th Meeting of ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Livestock (ASWGL) at the Orchard Hotel, from 5-7 May 2004. Dr Chua Sin Bin, Director of Food and Veterinary Administration (FVA) and Chief Veterinary Officer of AVA, was the Guest-of-Honour for the opening ceremony held on 5 May 2004.

The Meeting was attended by representatives from all 10 ASEAN Member Countries. The ASWGL has traditionally been the forum for regional co-operation of ASEAN member countries to strive towards the common goal of strengthening the region's trade and commerce in the livestock sector.

Delegates participated in small working groups to discuss and propose recommendations for updates on regional co-operation projects for the Regulation of Products and Utilization of Animal Vaccines, as well as in the Promotion of International Trade in Livestock and Livestock Products. Through the ASWGL, these recommendations would then be tabled to the Senior Officials Meeting of ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture And Forestry (SOM-AMAF) and the Meeting of ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) for endorsement.

The annual ASWGL meeting will be held in Thailand next year.



The 12th Meeting of ASEAN Sectoral Working Group on Livestock was attended by representatives from 10 ASEAN Member Countries.

Keeping Food at Safe Temperatures

Food may be contaminated with food spoilage and food poisoning bacteria. Food poisoning bacteria are the culprits that cause food borne illness. If food is not stored properly, food poisoning bacteria can multiply to dangerous levels and can cause food poisoning.

As a general guide, keep hot food hot and cold food cold. This is because bacteria multiply quickly in the temperature danger zone (between 5°C and 60°C). By keeping food at temperatures below 5°C or above 60°C, the growth of bacteria can be slowed down or stopped.

Food that is mishandled can have serious consequences for all, especially infants, young children, older adults, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems. For this reason, it is important that you take care when handling and storing food. Always keep food at the right temperatures and read the label for handling and storage instructions.

By observing a few simple and good practices, we can maintain the quality of food and minimise the risk of food poisoning. **Together, let's keep food safe!**



Message from Oscar, our Food Safety Mascot

AVA has chosen the otter to be Singapore's national food safety mascot. He has been named Oscar.

The otter is an animal with good food safety habits and enjoys a wide variety of food.

Through Oscar, AVA hopes to bring the food safety message closer to your heart.

For consumer tips on food safety, visit www.ava.gov.sg



**Together
Let's Keep
Food
Safe!**



The Food Safety Otter

Your cut & keep guide on safe food storage

This table can be used as a general guide on how long we can keep our food in the refrigerator or freezer. Always follow manufacturer's guidelines for handling and storage instructions.

PRODUCT	REFRIGERATOR (4°C)	FREEZER (1-18°C)
Dairy Products		
Fresh Eggs	3 - 5 weeks	Do not freeze
Pasteurised Milk - opened	2 - 3 days	Do not freeze
- unopened	Use by date	Do not freeze
UHT Milk - opened	2 - 3 days	Do not freeze
Chilled Meat and Seafood		
Bacon	5 - 7 days	1 - 2 months
Cooked Ham	3 - 4 days	1 - 2 months
Sausages	1 - 2 days	1 - 2 months
Beef / Veal	3 - 5 days	6 - 9 months
Lamb / Mutton	3 - 5 days	3 - 6 months
Pork	2 - 3 days	1 - 2 months
Poultry	1 - 2 days	1 - 3 months
Fish	1 - 2 days	2 - 4 months
Clams, Mussels, Oysters & Squids	1 - 2 days	3 - 4 months
Crabs, Crayfish, Prawns & Lobsters	2 - 3 days	2 - 3 months
Cooked Prawns & Mussels	3 - 4 days	2 - 3 months
Fishballs & Yong Tau Foo - pre-packed	Use by date	Do not freeze
- loose	1 - 2 days	Do not freeze
Cooked Meatballs	3 - 4 days	1 - 2 months
Frozen Meat and Seafood (After Thawing)		
Sausages	1 - 2 days	1 - 2 months
Beef / Veal	2 - 4 days	9 - 12 months
Lamb / Mutton	2 - 4 days	6 - 9 months
Pork	1 - 3 days	4 - 6 months
Poultry	1 day	6 - 12 months
Fish	1 day	3 - 6 months
Prawns	1 - 2 days	9 - 12 months
Oysters - shucked	1 day	3 - 4 months
- shelled	1 day	2 - 3 months
Fishballs (cooked)	3 - 5 days	Use by date
Meatballs - raw	1 - 2 days	1 - 2 months
- cooked	3 - 4 days	2 - 3 months
Others		
Salads containing eggs, chicken, ham, tuna etc	1 - 2 days	Do not freeze
Tofu - pre-packed	Use by date	Do not freeze
- loose	1 - 2 days	Do not freeze



Food importers get I-RICH pickings on mobile phones

Delighting registered food importers by providing them a windfall in terms of latest information on import requirements is AVA's new I-RICH that was successfully implemented on February 9 this year.

An AVA staff effort under the innovation banner, I-RICH is the acronym for Information, in Reaching to a large pool of importers instantly, Improve work efficiency, Customer relationship and services and Hasten business decisions and actions.

I-RICH enables simple and fuss-free despatch of Short Message Service (SMS) alerts, such as product recalls, updated import requirements and other important reminders to registered food importers' mobile phones.

With more than 4,500 registered food importers, AVA used to take up to 3 days to either post or fax circulars to inform them of new requirements, updates and other pertinent information. Using the I-RICH, the latest updates are automatically sent through the secured government SMS gateway to mobile service providers who then dispatch the message to the respective mobile phones, effectively requiring only a maximum of 3 hours.

Feedback from importers has been heartening; most found the SMS useful and expressed the desire to continue receiving the SMS alerts. Far from sitting on its laurels, AVA is now exploring the possibility of extending this project to include all local processed food manufacturers and retailers.

Traders and members of the public who wish to receive the SMS alerts can contact AVA's Food Control Division at 6325 2579 or 6325 0783.



Quiz 6/2004

Answer these simple questions and five correct entries will stand to win AVA souvenirs. Just select the correct answer to each of the three questions that follow, and fax, e-mail or mail your entry together with your name, NRIC, address and contact details to:

Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority, 5 Maxwell Road, #04-00 Tower Block
MND Complex, Singapore 069110
Fax: 6220 6068, E-mail: ava_info@ava.gov.sg

Closing Date: 31 October 2004

1. Bacteria multiply quickly within the temperature range of
(a) 5 - 60°C (b) 100 - 120°C
2. The general guideline for food storage is keep hot food hot and cold food cold.
(a) True (b) False
3. How long can you store fish in the freezer at -18°C?
(a) 1 month (b) 1 - 2 months (c) 2 - 4 months



Riau veggies get fresh look

Vegetables from the Riau Vegetable Project get branded as "Value Fresh".

Marking a new milestone for the Singapore-Riau Vegetable Project was the Launch of "Value Fresh", a brand created for the Riau vegetables by NTUC Fairprice, the major supermarket buyer for these vegetables. The Launch on 1 January 2004 was graced by His Excellency, Bapak Mochamad Slamet Hidayat, Indonesian Ambassador to Singapore, and a representative of Governor of Riau Province, Bapak Herliyan Saleh. Chairman of Fairprice, Mr S Chandra Das and the Ambassador launched the brand.

Rich pickings for greens

On 22 October 2001, AVA and the Riau Province entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to transfer vegetable production technology to develop vegetable farming in Riau with the aim of selling the produce mainly to Singapore. Three years since then, the transfer of technology is completed, with Riau farms capable of producing export quality vegetables for the Singapore market.

As Dr Ngiam Tong Tau, CEO, AVA said "This Launch demonstrates the successful transition of the Vegetable Project from the technology transfer phase to the commercial marketing phase, and establishes the Riau Province as an alternative source of vegetables for Singapore".

Fairprice is one of the first supermarkets to make use of this alternative source. According to Mr Chandra Das: "The Riau vegetables complement our current vegetable supply that comes mainly from local and Malaysian sources. ... As a retailer, we look to diverse sources for our products so as to bring more variety and better quality and value to our customers."

Veggie variety in future

A total of 110 hectares of vegetable farms have been developed in the Riau Province. AVA had trained the farmers on protective netted cultivation in accordance with Singapore's good



The "Value Fresh" brand created for the Riau vegetables by NTUC Fairprice was launched on 1 January 2004.

farming practices. Vegetables were processed in a Processing Centre equipped with pre-cooling and cold room facilities and carefully selected and trimmed for export. Consumers can look forward to buying top quality vegetables from Riau.

With continual encouragement and commitment from the Riau provincial government, vegetables imported from Riau are expected to reach 150 tonnes per week by end of the year. In his speech, Bapak Mochamad said, "I am confident that Riau vegetables will quickly gain a foothold in the Singapore market. Although Riau now exports only four types of vegetables to Singapore, local consumers can certainly look forward to more variety of Riau vegetables in the near future."

The Ambassador is also positive about other areas of collaboration between Indonesia and Singapore, he said "This is only the beginning, as I am confident that there will be more of such technology transfer opportunities between the two countries. We can continue to share our experiences and expertise in areas beyond farming."

Held at NTUC Bedok North Branch, the Launch was attended by more than 100 guests, and included a cooking demonstration and vegetable tasting session by Ms Violet Oon.



Expert touch in assessing new flora

AVA will be providing the technical evaluation in applications by plant breeders for protection of new plant varieties.

Spelling good times for plant breeders is Singapore's recent accession to the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV Convention). A result of the US-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (USSFTA), the Plant Varieties Protection (PVP) Bill was passed by Parliament on 15 June 04 and came into effect on 1 July 2004. According to the Bill, plant breeders can now seek rights protection for their new varieties for 25 years.

AVA will be playing a critical role in Singapore's plant variety protection system as it has been appointed the national technical examination authority for the new plant varieties. Working closely with the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (which will administer the accession and membership in the UPOV Convention), AVA will provide the technical inputs and perform the substantive examinations on the applications seeking for UPOV protection. AVA will also represent the Government regionally and internationally on technical plant examination matters relating to the horticulture and agri-food sector, to fulfill Singapore's obligations towards the UPOV Convention.

Protecting breeders' rights

Plant breeding is an activity that requires a lot of investment from a breeder in terms of time and resources. Singapore did not previously have a patent system tailored to the horticulture industry that protects the rights of our plant breeders. If a new variety is not properly protected, a breeder's competitors can secure

supplies of propagating material and in a short time compete with him, profiting from his many years of breeding effort.

The UPOV Convention protects the rights of breeders who discover or develop a new plant variety. When a breeder is given the Grant of Protection for a Plant Variety, he will have the right to prevent others from stocking, producing, selling or using the new plant variety without his authorisation (for example, via a royalty or fee). Exceptions to the right are allowed for non-commercial purposes like experiments, and for breeding other varieties.

International access to plant varieties

As a member of UPOV, Singapore will also have easier access to new and better varieties developed by breeders in other countries because they will be assured of protection in our domestic market. Likewise, our local breeders will be given the same high level of protection in all member states (countries) of the Convention. Currently, new varieties of 15 plant genera or species are eligible for protection. Protection will be extended to all plant species in 10 years time.

Plant breeders who wish to protect their new varieties have to apply at the PVP Registry located at IPOS, and then send the plant materials to AVA's Horticulture Services Centre for technical examination. The candidate plant variety that meets the following criteria will be granted rights protection:

- Novelty
- Have a suitable denomination
- Distinctness
- Uniformity
- Stability

LIST OF GENERA AND SPECIES CURRENTLY ELIGIBLE FOR PROTECTION

	Botanical Name	Common Name
(1) Orchids	<i>Dendrobium</i> Sw.	Dendrobium
	<i>Mokara</i>	Mokara
	<i>Oncidium</i> Sw.	Oncidium
	<i>Vanda</i> R. Br	Vanda
	<i>Aranda</i>	Aranda
	<i>Aranthera</i>	Aranthera
	<i>Phalaenopsis</i> Blume	Phalaenopsis
	<i>Renantanda</i>	Renantanda
(2) Aquatic plants and Ornamentals	<i>Anubias</i>	Anubias
	<i>Cryptocoryne</i>	Cryptocoryne
	<i>Echinodorus</i>	Sword Plant
	<i>Limnophilla</i>	Limnophilla
	<i>Heliconia</i>	Heliconia
(3) Vegetables	<i>Brassica chinensis</i> L.	Baicaï, Xiaobiacaï
	<i>Brassica chinensis</i> var <i>parachinensis</i>	Caixin

Wild pets not welcome

Don't expect a red carpet welcome for your exotic pets in Singapore. The sale and keeping of exotic animals such as reptiles, amphibians and primates as pets are not permitted in this country. But judging by the number of such pets seized by AVA in February 2004 - a record number of 28 comprising snakes, tarantulas (venomous spiders) and tortoises - the fan base for exotic pets is increasing. These animals are often obtained illegally, either smuggled into the country or bought from illegal traders in shops or through online Internet retailers.

Defending the ecosystem

The reasons for not allowing the sale and keeping of exotic pets are manifold, chief among which are:

- They can potentially spread diseases to humans and domestic animals.
- The collection and trade of wild animals can negatively impact the ecosystem and threaten the survival of the species, if it is endangered.
- The welfare of the animal may be compromised due to factors such as unsuitable living conditions and poor diet compounded by a pet owner who may be ignorant of the often special needs of the exotic animal.
- Singapore's biodiversity can be greatly affected if such exotic pets were released in the wild, as most of them are non-native.
- Should the pet escape, it can cause nuisance, fear and trauma to the general public.



Regulating to save the endangered

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) is the management authority responsible for implementation and enforcement of The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). CITES is an international agreement to ensure that trade does not threaten wildlife species with extinction. The Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act enacted in 1989 gives legal effect to the implementation and enforcement of the Convention in Singapore. Under the Act, a permit is required to import, export, re-export or introduce from the sea a scheduled species. The Act also empowers AVA enforcement officers to search, enter and seize any illegal wildlife, hence facilitating the investigation of CITES infringement cases. Penalties under this Act for anyone convicted of illegal import, export, re-export, possession, sale or display of endangered species are fines of up to \$5000 and/or imprisonment of up to 12 months.

In addition to the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, AVA administers the Wild Animals and Birds Act which prohibits the capture and export of native fauna and regulates import of wildlife. AVA also works closely with CITES Secretariat, other CITES parties, Immigration and Checkpoints Authority, Non-governmental Organisations and members of the public and acts on any information or tip-offs on illegal trade in endangered species.

Depending on the severity of the case, offenders are given a warning, compounded or prosecuted in court. Confiscated animals are given to the Singapore Zoological Gardens, Jurong Bird Park, Underwater World Singapore, National University of Singapore or Singapore Science Centre for educational purposes.

CITES CASE FILE

West Coast Wildlife

Acting on tip-offs from varied sources, AVA enforcement officers from the Wildlife Regulatory Branch (CITES Section) investigated a flat at West Coast on 19 February 2004 for the keeping of illegal wildlife. Upon inspection, a total of 22 animals were seized, 14 of which were CITES Appendix II snakes. Other animals seized included a blue-tongued skink, a star tortoise, a pair of alligator snapping turtles and 4 sugar gliders. The offender, a University student, was slapped with a \$7000 fine for possession of CITES-listed animals and a written warning was issued to him for possession of other wildlife.



Some of the many snakes seized during the raid at West Coast Drive.



Green tree pythons can fetch a selling price of up to \$400.

Ball pythons can reach to lengths of over 1 metre.



Plus points in pet adoption

Why adopt a pet?

Homeless stray animals do not have a good life. It is estimated that a stray dog or cat lives an average of 2-3 years whereas one kept as a pet can live up to 20 years. If strays or abandoned pets do not find a home, they will be euthanised or put down humanely. Around 20,000 cats and dogs are put down every year in Singapore. This shows that there are far more animals than there are homes for them. Adopting a pet saves a life and would help minimise the stray problem.

Why adopt an older pet?

By taking home an older pet, the adopter can avoid undesirable surprises later, as the personality, size and appearance of the pet can be assured. In addition, the pet may already be toilet trained and have other basic training.

Where can one adopt a pet?

Animal welfare organisations like the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), Action for Singapore Dogs (ASD), Cat Welfare Society (CWS) and House Rabbits Society of Singapore (HRSS) have many adoptable animals. These animals have been abandoned with or rescued by these societies and are kept either at their premises or those of their members who care for these animals.

What is the adoption procedure like?

A potential adopter can contact the various animal welfare societies to enquire on the adoptable animals they currently have and make an appointment to view them. Because it is important for the animals to go to a permanent home, the adopter will need to discuss his/her suitability as a pet owner with advisors from the societies. The different societies will have their own terms and conditions but once these are agreed upon, the adopter can take the pet home.

Looking to add a pet to your life? Consider adopting a homeless animal from an animal welfare society or from someone fostering a pet instead of running down to the nearest petshop. Whether you want a puppy or a more mature dog, a purebred or a mixed-breed, even a rabbit or a hamster, animal welfare societies do offer a wide variety of pets for adoption and best of all they have all been screened for good health and behaviour and sterilised.

These animal welfare societies also endeavour to match pets to potential owners and offer advice and information to help guide and support adopters. Though not free, the expenses you incur in adopting a pet go towards paying for the medical needs (e.g. sterilisation, deworming, vaccination) of the animal and the administrative cost of the adoption. Purchasing a pet from a petshop can be a much more costly affair.

Where do animals for adoption come from?

Many pets that await new homes come from off the streets or from people who surrender their pets to animal welfare societies. Such instances occur because some pet owners start off having unrealistic expectations of the time, effort and money required to sustain a lifelong commitment with their pet. When reality strikes, pets get abandoned or sent to animal welfare societies.

Do you have what it takes to be a responsible pet owner? If you are keen to adopt a pet, and prepared to take care of your pet for life, come down to AVA's Pet Adoption Drive! Adopt a pet from animal welfare groups including the Action for Singapore Dogs, Animal Lovers' League, Cat Welfare Society, House Rabbits Society of Singapore, Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and SOS Animals.

The event details are as follows:

AVA's Pet Adoption Drive

Date : 17 Oct 2004 (Sunday)
Venue : Bishan Park 2 (near the dog run area)
Time : 11.00 am - 6.00 pm



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