

Dogs to receive chip implant in Singapore

All dogs in Singapore will have to be implanted with a microchip enabling them to be traced back to their owners starting next month as part of a crackdown on irresponsible pet ownership.

Under measures unveiled by the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA), allowing man's best friend to run free without a licence will incur a fine of up to 5,000 Singapore dollars (about \$330), a 10-fold hike from the current maximum.

The AVA receives nearly 3,000 complaints about stray dogs each year. Many have been abandoned. The total dog population in the city-state numbers more than 47,000.

The new ruling is similar to programmes in Portugal and New Zealand, where micro chipping is compulsory.

Tiny electronic chips are implanted under the skin in a simple and painless procedure, the AVA said. The chips carry a number registered in the name of the dog's owner.

Other measures going into effect next month include an annual 70-Singapore-dollar fee for owners of an unsterilized dog, up from 14 Singapore dollars for males but the same as the current fee for females.

Unsterilized males and females are 'equally responsible' for breeding, the AVA statement said.

All dogs bred on farms will have to be licensed, with breeders forking up to 3,500 Singapore dollars annually for more than 300 dogs on their premises.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said they hope the new measures will make owners think hard before dumping their pets. The SPCA received 9,706 unwanted animals last year, with dogs making up 2,727 of the total.

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