

[AFCD urges public to think carefully before releasing animals](#)

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (May 14) reminded members of the public to think carefully before participating in mercy releases of animals.

A spokesman for the AFCD said, "Some members of the public engaged themselves in mercy release activities which involve releasing animals in recent years. However, releasing animals not in a proper manner, including releasing them into an unsuitable habitat, may affect their survival. In addition, if exotic species or species that are incompatible with the local ecology are released, they may compete with native species for resources and adversely affect the local ecology. Therefore, the Government does not encourage the public to release animals."

The AFCD sends staff at appropriate times to inspect places where animal releasing activities are likely to take place, and carries out publicity and education work.

Under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance (Cap. 169), it is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to animals by releasing them not in a proper manner. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and imprisonment for three years upon conviction.

The spokesman stressed that to safeguard animal welfare, members of the public must think carefully before participating in animal release activities. The AFCD is launching a fish restocking exercise on National Fish Releasing Day on June 6 to release fish fingerlings in Yan Chau Tong Marine Park to enhance local marine resources and ecology. The department will promote to the public the benefits of fish restocking to the environment, with a view to engaging them in supporting and participating in these science-based restocking exercises in lieu of animal releases not properly conducted. They may also consider other charitable activities such as planting trees or participating in volunteer services with animal welfare groups and environmental organisations.