

## \* PIJAC RECRUITS PET OWNERS FOR CAMPAIGN

A bill penned by a Central Valley politician would require the names of California felony animal abusers to be placed in a registry, like sex offenders and arsonists.

Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, introduced the bill in February. He's hoping it will help stop not just animal abuse, but abuse done to people as well.

Lisa Franzetta, spokeswoman for the Animal Legal Defense Fund, said it's well known that animal abusers escalate into committing violent crimes against people.

"We drafted a model that would provide for mandatory registration and community notification of convicted animal abusers," Franzetta said. "We have been consulting closely with Sen. Florez."

Florez said the biggest problem has been with hoarders, people who keep more than usual numbers of animals as pets, without having the means to take care of those animals. Some hoarders have been found with hundreds of animals, often living in appalling conditions, Florez said.

"There's no way to find out about these people until it's too late," Florez said.

The legislation, if passed, wouldn't use state money to fund the bill, but instead would put a levy on pet food. Florez is asking for a levy of three cents a pound of pet food, which he said figures out to about \$1.50 a year for the owner of one cat.

"We are asking people who have animals to participate in making sure there is some sort of protection for animals," Florez said.

The bill would require only those convicted of felony animal abuse to register, and only people over the age of 18 would have to register.

Felony abuse of animals includes violence against animals, sexual abuse of animals, torture, mutilation, animal fighting and hoarding.

"We aren't the first state to propose this," Florez said. "The state of Washington has done the same, asking for the same amount of levy on pet food."

And if there was any money left over from the pet food levies, Florez said it would go to county and city animal shelters to help start spay and neuter programs.

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## \* UQ RESEARCH EYES OFF COLOURFUL REEF FISH

Most people wouldn't give a second thought to the inner workings of the fish eye.

But research by University of Queensland scientists is unlocking the secrets hidden behind these fishy lenses.

Professor Justin Marshall, and colleagues from the Sensory Neurobiology Group within UQ's Queensland Brain Institute, have found, for the first time, how certain types of fish see colour.

Professor Marshall's work revolves around the role double cones play in the vision of trigger fishes. Cones are light sensitive cells in eyes that

allow us to see, and double cones are two such cells fused together.

"It has been suggested that double cones are used for achromatic (non-colour) tasks such as luminance, motion and polarisation vision," Professor Marshall said.

"This is the first direct evidence that individual members of double cones are used in colour vision as independent spectral channels."

"This is odd as they are the commonest photoreceptor in the eyes of most diurnal animals and these new results show for the first time that in the trigger fish, a colourful inhabitant of The Great Barrier Reef, these cones are used for colour vision."

He said while the eyes of most vertebrates including fish, frogs, reptiles and kangaroos, are packed with double cones, their function was not previously known.

"These photoreceptors are not present in human retina or other placental mammals and, perhaps as a result, we have overlooked the fact that we do not know what they do," he said.

"The discovery that reef fish use double cones for colour vision solves a centuries old mystery."

The research, which was a collaboration between UQ researchers and Dr Misha Vorobyev, from the University of Auckland, was published recently in scientific journal *Biology Letters*.

## \* (USA) SENATE BILL 690

Legislation introduced in Missouri would impose new legal requirements on persons selling dogs and cats, including disclosure and reporting requirements. Senate Bill 690 would also create a statutory warranty, meaning that buyers of dogs and cats would be entitled to recover a refund or other compensation from the pet dealer if the animal becomes ill or dies from a condition that existed at the time the animal was delivered to the buyer. A "pet dealer" as defined by this bill encompasses any person, business or other entity (including breeders) that sells more than 20 dogs or cats, or three litters, in a 12-month period. The definition does not include animal control agencies, humane societies or similar non-profit organizations.

Provisions of SB 690 are similar to those found in warranty statutes in many other states, with some distinctions. One major difference, however, is that many pet warranty laws apply only to the retail sale of animals. But this bill extends to breeders as well (so long as they sell the required number of dogs or cats).

The bill requires that any dog or cat must be examined by a veterinarian no more than 30 days prior to sale and that the buyer be given a written statement at time of sale containing the following information:

- If known, the breed and date of birth for the dog or cat.
- The sex and colour of the dog or cat.
- The breeder's name and address or, if not known, the name and address of whomever

the pet dealer acquired the animal from.

- If acquired from a USDA licensed source, the identifying number.
- Registration information, if the animal is being sold as registrable.
- A record of all inoculations and worming treatments received by the animal, as well as any veterinarian diagnosis, treatment or medication received while the animal was in the pet dealer's possession.

## \* CANADA CHANGES LAW TO MAKE VETERINARIANS RESPONSIBLE FOR REPORTING ABUSE

Veterinarians in Nova Scotia are now required to report possible animal abuse, neglect and cruelty under changes to the provincial Animal Protection Act.

The new laws mean that vets no longer have to fear court reprisals for telling the SPCA about people who mistreat their animals.

SPCA executive director Kristin Williams says the new law is similar to the law that requires doctors to report suspected abuse of children.

Williams says that under the old law, divulging information about pets was considered personal information, and therefore private.

The SPCA has three investigators in the province who handle more than 1,500 complaints a year. Williams says the changes will allow Nova Scotia to be more responsive to the welfare of animals across the province.

*The Canadian Press*

## \* THE FIRST PET IS THE FONDEST

Eight out of ten Australians grow up with a pet and new research from the Petcare Information and Advisory Service (PIAS) shows the first pet in a person's life has a significant influence on their choice of pet as an adult.

"Our research showed that the love a child has for their first pet influences both the type of pet they want to have as an adult and the actual breed of dog or cat," Susie Willis from the PIAS said.

"For example, the research showed that someone who grew up with an energetic, outdoor dog may not even consider an alternative type of dog when they are an adult."

*PIAS*

## \* GOVERNMENT PROPOSES NEW LAWS TO PENALISE BAD OWNERS

Proposed new laws are being drawn up to make it easier for animal inspectors to penalise bad owners of dogs and cats.

RSPCA Victoria head Dr Hugh Wirth has been appointed by the Federal Government to help draft national animal welfare standards and guidelines.

He says the Government wants to expand the Victorian code of practice for the keeping of cats and dogs.

Dr Wirth says the new laws would not punish people who occasionally fall down in their responsibilities.

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