

Dear Dr Lou,

Appeal to stop the contests organised by Pets Village and assistance in improving the situation of The World Rabbit Exhibition at Harbourfront Centre

We like to bring to your attention and express our concerns on the on-going rabbit shows and contests that are being organised by Pets Village in Suntec City Tropics Atrium and another World Rabbit Exhibition organised by the Harbourfront Centre on the 19 – 23 Jan 2011.

There are 2 particular competitions, which could cause unnecessarily stress to rabbits, which our society would like to highlight.

The “Best Dressed Rabbit” contest (marketed as “The “Rabbit-est of Them’All!” in the Pets Village event) is absolutely unsuitable for rabbits. It is unnatural for a rabbit to be clothed and this is a form of animal abuse. We may think that it is cute and fun to dress our pets up in clothes that we (or dolls) would wear, but it is most certainly a form of animal abuse – especially so for rabbits.

Rabbits are prey animals and are therefore ultra sensitive to their bodies being wrapped in materials. This is because they liken the gripping sensation to being caught by a predator. When this happens, the rabbit feels threatened and its heart rate quickens. It tries to get itself out of the situation by struggling or dashing about to escape from its “predator”. When this happens, the rabbit experiences unnecessary stress and risks severe injury. There have been numerous cases of broken backs, necks, legs in rabbits from people trying to put things on them – from clothes to collars to harnesses.

Having a rabbit wear clothes also greatly restricts its movement. It prevents it from stretching out comfortably, to moving about freely, to grooming itself – all of which are natural behaviors that rabbits do on a daily basis. Not to mention how hot the rabbit will be with the extra layer of clothing over its already thick fur in our hot and humid climate.

The Racing Rabbits competition (in the Pets Village event) is equally not suitable for rabbits. We are extremely concerned to see the public racing their rabbits against one another as rabbits, being prey animals, are by nature extremely timid. They get stressed easily – especially in unfamiliar, noisy environments like a mall. Rabbits do not behave like

cats and dogs, which could perform at a race or contest, and should not be treated like them.

The ongoing World Rabbit Exhibition by the Harbourfront Centre is causing the rabbits lot of stress where they could be easily mishandled by anyone. Rabbits are fragile and delicate animals by nature. If mishandle by children, they could result in broken back and legs. Under Licensing requirement, one of the conditions states that the responsibilities of the licensee need to ensure that the animals are managed properly, given enough rest and not subjected to STRESS.

We also attached pictures of the exhibition for your perusal. We note that there is no one monitoring the situation where members of the public easily touch the rabbits and further stresses the rabbits.

HRSS would appreciate if AVA could step in to stop the 2 contests by Pets Village and improve the situation of the World Rabbit Exhibition by Harbourfront Centre.

Yours Sincerely,
Jacelyn Heng
President, HRSS