

PE1561/A

Best4Bunny.com Letter of 18 May 2015

With reference to - Scottish Parliament Petition PE01561 Rabbit Welfare

Introduce a licensing regime for sellers of young rabbits similar to that for young cats and dogs.

Initiate a ban on pet shop sales via the implementation of Ordinances Protecting Rabbits as is operational in numerous States & Cities in Northern USA & Canada.

Create minimum standards for rabbit related products, such as housing and feed.

Make one body responsible for overseeing and enforcing pet shop licensing regulations, e.g. the SSPCA.

I agree with all of the above points and by introducing these changes I believe they will make a huge difference in the amount of abandoned and neglected rabbits that we are seeing each & every single year.

Why things need to change...

The numbers of abandoned and neglected rabbits is spiralling out of control. The numbers increase dramatically every year, especially at Easter and at Christmas time. This proves that one of the problems is that people can buy rabbits too easily from a pet shop with no questions asked and the people buying them have no real knowledge of knowing how to look after rabbits properly.

Pet shop staff are not trained to educate people properly as they are not fully educated themselves on rabbit care.

Vets can struggle when it comes to telling the sex of rabbits - so to depend on untrained pet shop staff to correctly sex rabbits is massively irresponsible.

No action is taken for the rabbits that are sold, to be neutered/spayed. This will lead to unwanted litters - which is one reason so many rabbits are abandoned This then causes a never ending problem for rescues across the country

Many pet shops fail to require the right environment for rabbits on sale as they require the rabbits to be on show to customers at all times. This causes stress to the rabbits as they need to sleep during the day and have a safe place to retreat to where they feel safe & secure. This also sends the wrong message to new rabbit owners as they are not seeing how rabbits should be housed properly because the pet shop fails to do this.

Pet shops do not have the space to stock & display ideal housing for rabbits - they stock & promote hutches and cages that are far too small for a rabbit to live a happy, healthy life. This also gives the message to new rabbit owners that these size homes are perfectly ok when that couldn't

be further from the truth. Without any minimum size requirements by law for rabbit housing, this will just continue to happen.

Many breeders do not care for the welfare of rabbits and breed rabbits in such a way that result in the rabbits having many health issues - the pet shops will sell unhealthy rabbits, no questions asked. If not already ill, most rabbits will go on to suffer illnesses throughout their life - this then results in high vet bills which then results in rabbits being abandoned or neglected.

Many times have I seen young rabbits sneezing and have been told by pet shop staff that they have a cold. Rabbits do not get colds.

Many times I have seen rabbits with diarrhoea in pet shops caused by the wrong diet or stress. This can then go on to them having many serious health issues throughout their life.

The whole situation needs to change with rabbits being sold in pet shops & bred by irresponsible breeders.

Ideally rabbits need to no longer be sold in pet shops.

If this was to sadly continue, then make it law that only neutered/spayed rabbits were sold.

Pet shops need to stop selling baby rabbits from breeders and start working alongside rescues instead, to help re home the thousands of rabbits urgently needing homes.

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