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Expert unveils steps to promote animal welfare

By Peter Townson

THE condition of pet animals in Qatar and possible changes to improve animal welfare will be investigated by a visiting expert over the next week.

Dr Safwat Ali Hassan will examine local clinics, pet shops and other animal organisations during his stay.

Dr Hassan, who is a German-based

veterinarian of Egyptian origin, has been invited by

the Qatari government to conduct the investigation.

Yesterday he gave a lecture at the Ministry of Agriculture on the subject of pets in society.

He also put forward a proposal for a national “Qatar Veterinary Centre” which he described as a necessary development for animal welfare in the country.

“We need to have a hospital for treating pet animals and a shelter for stray cats and dogs,” he said, claiming that once these have been introduced with government intervention and support, new laws and regulations can be imposed.

“How can anyone be punished for mistreating animals when the government has no place to treat them anyway,” he asked, claiming that education and explanation are necessary to develop animal welfare in Qatar.

He said though there is a common misconception that taking care of pets is somehow anti-Islamic, in fact showing mercy to animals is one of the pillars of Islam.

During his lecture he provided examples from the Qur’an referring to animals and how Muslims must “show mercy and relieve animals’ pain.”

He then went on to provide examples of dogs performing useful jobs in society, such as guide dogs, tracker dogs, police dogs and many others, before showing photographs of an animal shelter in Berlin, the largest such facility in Europe.

Hassan also showed slides detailing many of the medical procedures he carries out at his surgery in Germany, displaying the improvements that surgery can make in animals’ lives.

Although Hassan’s intentions are admirable, and he has been busy gleaning what information he can to help him suggest the necessary changes to improve animal welfare in Qatar, he is not unrealistic and is aware that his project will be a long-term one, and “require more than one visit.”

He said that education is essential in helping achieve his aims, and requested that Qatar’s leadership consider getting involved in promoting animal welfare in the country, and supporting the only animal shelter that currently exists, the Qatar Animal Welfare Society (QAWS).

And he has been promised by ministry officials that his suggestions will be taken seriously, and that his “fingerprint will be left on the law in Qatar,” with the intention of changing attitudes and laws regarding the treatment of pets.



Dr Hassan .. ‘respect for animals should be part of children’s education

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