

Activists urge ban on buying, selling of animal traps

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Animal rights activists yesterday urged the government to ban the purchase and sale of animal traps, as many pets as well as children have fallen victim to them.

Showing a picture of a black dog surrounded by seven newborn puppies, Juan Mei-ling (簡美玲), executive director of Life Caring and Animal Rescue Organization, said the dog lost part of its front paw after being caught in a trap in Sindian District (新莊), New Taipei City (新北市), last month.

“The dog was pregnant when it was found, so the veterinarian could not operate on her,” Juan told a news conference in Taipei. “When we could finally do the operation after the puppies were born, the wound has become so bad we could only cut off the palm.”

Juan said that the Sindian case was not an isolated one.

Each year, hundreds of pets, as well as stray dogs and cats, are injured by animal traps across the country, she said, adding that children had sometimes become victims, too.

“Our rescue team has saved many cats and dogs wounded by animal traps — but sometimes these wounded animals away out of fear and pain, and we don’t always find them,” Juan said, while urging the government to ban sale of animal traps to prevent further injuries.

Supporting Juan’s call, Democratic Progressive Party Legislator Tien Chiu-chin (田秋堃) cited the case of an Austrian girl who almost broke her arm when she accidentally touched an animal trap.

“That led to a complete ban of animal traps in that country,” she said.

“The government should not wait until a tragedy like that happens in Taiwan before banning

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animal traps,” she said.

Lin Tsung-yi (林宗義), a Council of Agriculture official who attended the news conference, said that under current laws, “the use of animal traps is restricted, but sales are allowed.”

“If we are to prohibit sales [of animal traps], we have to talk to the Ministry of Economic Affairs about revising the law,” Lin said. “But before doing so, we’ve asked stores selling animal traps to instruct buyers about the rules on using animal traps. Right now, misuse [of animal traps] is subject to a fine of NT\$15,000 to NT\$70,000.”

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