

STRAY AND UNWANTED DOGS *continued*

Your decision to relinquish any involvement of the Department of the Environment in trying to solve the serious stray dog problem in this country goes against the recommendations and pleas of all those organisations who are directly involved in coping with the consequences of this problem. To suggest that local authorities already have adequate existing powers and the necessary funding is contrary to all the available evidence and also the recommendations of the Government's own Working Party of 1976.

The RSPCA's determination to seek a practical solution to the stray dog problem will not lessen and I assure you that we will continue to press for essential legislative reforms and properly financed dog control measures.

Yours faithfully,

J S Felthouse (Mrs),
Chairman of the RSPCA Council.

POSTSCRIPT

On 20th August, Mrs Angela Rumbold, MP, Under-Secretary of State, replied to Mrs Felthouse. This reply seems to indicate that the Government apparently still want to bring about improvements in dog welfare and control, although this will now be in the hands of the Home Office and not the Department of the Environment.

NEW CHAIRMAN FOR RSPCA

The RSPCA has elected Mrs Joan Felthouse of Penkridge in Staffordshire as Chairman of its Governing Council. The election, which took place in July, chalks up two 'firsts' in the Charity's 162-year history; she is the first Chairman from the Midlands, and the first to be a working farmer. With her husband John she runs their 211-acre arable farm just south of Stafford where she also manages the boarding cattery — the largest in Europe — which she started 20 years ago.

Mrs Felthouse's association with the RSPCA began when she joined the Stafford and County Branch in 1963. She was elected Branch Secretary shortly afterwards, and became Honorary Regional Secretary in 1980. She was elected to the Governing Council in 1982 and has been Vice Chairman throughout 1984 and 1985. Her knowledge of the Charity, from the day-to-day running of a busy Branch to the policy-making role of the Council, is extensive.

A major problem confronting the RSPCA is the stray dog situation. Mrs Felthouse feels strongly that Government controls are vital if the over-production of dogs and their casual abandonment by irresponsible owners are to be halted.

Farming, too, is an area where she feels she has a personal contribution to make. "I am wholeheartedly in favour of RSPCA policies opposing certain intensive farming practices", she says, "but I know a lot of the farmers'



Mrs Joan Felthouse

problems, too. I am convinced that sympathetic persuasion will achieve a lot more in the long term than confrontation."

Her interest in young people is reflected in her enthusiasm for the RSPCA's educational role. "The future of animal welfare is with the younger generation, and I would welcome a great many more young members into the Society."

Mrs Felthouse succeeds Mr Anelay Hart, the Middlesbrough solicitor, who now becomes Vice-Chairman.