KUCHING: The rise of sedentary lifestyle and obesity not only affects the human population but is also indirectly mirrored on companion animals. This is due to today’s lifestyle where everything is convenient and physical activities no longer play an important role and this inadvertently reflects on our pets,” said Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) Animal Welfare & Ethology senior lecturer Dr Sumita Sugnaseelan.

Speaking at the Animal Welfare Seminar held at the Veterinary Department Headquarters here yesterday, she told reporters that many pet owners probably equate feeding their pets with loving them and often feed their four-legged companions more than they should.

“They forget that pets such as dogs and cats do need exercise and if they are overweight, this would eventually lead to a variety of health problems,” said Dr Sumita.

Asked on how pet owners can prevent pet obesity, she suggested inculcating a ‘buddy system’ where owners bring their pets for a workout together while also educating themselves on their pets’ behaviour.

Besides touching on animal obesity, Dr Sumita also spoke on topics such as ‘The Ethics of Keeping Companion Animals’ and ‘Companion Animal Ownership & Legislation’.

Organised by the State Veterinary Authority, around 50 participants comprising veterinarians, state veterinary and agriculture section staff as well as pet shop owners attended the inaugural seminar, which was held with the objective of raising awareness on animal welfare.