

Fresh eggs

Tails of woe Is your doggy down in the dumps, your cat a bit cranky, your parrot positively petulant or your gecko grouchy for no apparent reason? Like humans, animals can get depressed, anxious or aggressive and have emotional and psychological issues. While we humans can seek therapy, our pets don't have such options.

Until now, that is. Cynthia Smillie is a vet who specialises in animal behaviour therapy. She assesses and treats emotional psychological problems in animals, visiting them in their homes and getting to know them.

Says Smillie: "I have been a vet in Hong Kong for 23 years and during that time I've worked with organisations such as the RSPCA, where I saw a lot of abandoned animals. So many are there because of behavioural problems, and a very high proportion are put down because of it."

Smillie wanted to help, so, in 2008, she took a graduate diploma in animal behaviour at Britain's University of Southampton. Now, she has set up the Animal Behaviour Veterinary Practice in Sai Kung – the first of its kind in Hong Kong.

She is trained to work with all kinds of animals but, says Smillie, she focuses on companion animals because that's what's required in Hong Kong. She



Picture: AP

says the many problems that can be overcome include aggression, fear and separation issues.