



## The Dog Meat Trade – Fact Sheet

### Where Does it Happen?

Dog meat is consumed in several regions of the world, including parts of Europe, Russia, Africa and Latin America. However, it is most widespread in Asia, where the welfare concern is greatest due to the high numbers of dogs being taken from the streets, transported long distances and brutally slaughtered. In South Korea, dogs are also intensively farmed for the meat trade.

### How Many Dogs are Involved?

An estimated 20 million dogs are consumed each year in China (although some believe the figure to be far greater), and 2 to 2.5 million in South Korea. An estimated 5 million dogs are killed annually in Vietnam, of which a large proportion are sourced from other countries, namely Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, where conservative estimates suggest that over 80,000 dogs are exported live each year. Accurate figures for all these countries are impossible to obtain, as the dog meat trade is either illegal or operates largely unregulated.



### How are the Dogs Sourced?

In many countries where dog meat is popular, the animals are often sourced from the streets either through catching strays or by stealing pets. Some owners may sell their pets directly to meat vendors, but in other cases middle men, who steal dogs, will sell them on to traders and restaurant owners. In South Korea, many dogs are supplied in this way, but the majority are reared on large intensive farms, some of which house over 1,000 dogs.

Every year on these farms, millions of dogs are forced to endure terrible conditions and their basic needs are often ignored, not receiving adequate food, water or a clean place to sleep each day. The lack of suitable provisions for the dogs is so that the farmers can gain maximum profit. Numerous investigations into the industry have documented the cruel and pitiful conditions under which millions of dogs are farmed each year. As a result of the cramped, unhygienic and stressful environment in which the dogs are kept, physical disease and mental distress are profoundly evident, with many dogs showing obvious signs of sickness, depression, aggression, and abnormal behaviours.

## How are the Dogs Treated?

After being taken from the street or farmed, the dogs are often transported long distances, sometimes on journeys lasting days. During transport, dogs are usually tightly packed into cages where they are unable to stand up or turn around properly. They are often sick and injured, and are not provided with any food or water on the journey. Many animals die from suffocation, dehydration or heatstroke long before they reach their destination.

Their journey ends at a slaughterhouse, market or restaurant, where they are often kept alive until purchased. The method by which dogs are slaughtered varies between countries, provinces, slaughterhouses and restaurants. For example, in South Korea the only legal method for slaughtering a dog is by electrocution, but hanging is still routinely practiced by some. In China and Vietnam, dogs are often stunned by being beaten with a metal pipe and then bled out from a cut to the throat or groin, hanged, or thrown conscious into large drums of boiling water.



## What are the Health Risks?

Over recent years, there has been growing awareness of, and concern for, human health risks which are linked to all stages of the dog meat industry. Research shows that sourcing, farming, transporting, slaughtering and consumption of dogs can assist in the transmission of cholera, trichinellosis and rabies.

In 2011, a ground-breaking television program aired in South Korea that was a devastating indictment of the dog meat industry. One segment used an undercover team of reporters that delivered 17 different dog meat samples to the Seoul Health Environmental Research Centre, which tested them with shocking results. Among the 17 samples tested, germs were found in 7 above the limit including 4 types of colon bacillus and 1 type of yellow staphylococcus. In addition the widespread abuse of antibiotics and steroids used to ward off diseases in dogs killed for meat was revealed as a grave health concern. A dog meat farmer told the interviewers that he was using the antibiotic above the allowable limit. "For a large dog weighing around 20kg, we inject around 15-20ml of antibiotic." A veterinarian responded, "When the dogs treated with antibiotic is eaten while the medication is still effective in its system, it can have a life-threatening effect on humans."

Many researchers now believe that severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) began its human to human transition in live animal markets in China, where cages piled high with traditionally farmed animals and cats and dogs are crammed into the same market space alongside wild species, such as civet cats, snakes, barking deer and many others.

## What is Change For Animals Foundation Doing to Help?

CFAF is committed to ending the dog meat trade throughout Asia, working with local and international partner organisations and various stakeholders to highlight the inherent cruelty, promote compassion towards all animals, whilst also highlighting the risk the trade poses to human health, and offering and supporting practical solutions and training to assist to ensure an end to this cruel and dangerous trade.