



Until the cruelty ends

FRIENDS...OR FOOD?

WHY DOGS AND CATS DESERVE BETTER



There are many conflicting views regarding the sensitive issue of dog and cat eating. Charges of Western imperialism are regularly raised and arguments are also often tainted by unfair accusations and distorted facts.

In the light of calls to regulate the practice, we believe, as an animal-welfare group based in Asia, that it would be helpful to highlight the problems relating to the plea for so-called "humane" slaughter of dogs and cats in China, while putting forward a broad overview of the numerous benefits companion animals provide to society and the efforts of those groups working on the ground in Asia to create change.

Cruelty to animals is not unique to Asia: animals all over the world are horrendously mistreated in factory farms, the fur trade, sport hunting or in animal testing. But rather than happening behind closed doors as it often does in the West, the cruelty in Asia is more open and therefore subject to greater scrutiny and judgment. Animal welfare is a relatively new concept in many places in Asia, and as a result it is vital that we ensure we work together with one voice to give the animals the best protection possible.

## MARKET OVERVIEW



Dehydrated and dying cats for sale in a live-animal market in southern China.



Dogs arrive after a nightmare three-day journey by truck.

In markets, in cages, in misery – millions and millions of dogs and cats in Asia are confined and slaughtered in the most barbaric and brutal ways. In some cases the slaughter methods are deliberately cruel and where the torture is not deliberate, the method of slaughter is still routinely cruel, causing unimaginable suffering and pain. Millions of dogs and cats each year suffer a lingering, violent death, as they are either bludgeoned over the head, stabbed in the neck or groin and bled out, hanged, electrocuted or thrown conscious into vats of boiling water. During frequent visits to these hellholes since the mid 1980s, we are also witness to animals dying of horrific diseases such as cat flu, distemper, parvovirus and, very probably, rabies.

The argument that there are two types of dog – “pets” and “meat” – is redundant as pure breeds and pets are seen for sale as meat in the markets (a great number of dogs seen in the markets are wearing collars – an indication that they may have once been someone's pet). It is also estimated that a large portion of the cats seen in the markets are stolen pets.

For many, their nightmare begins on dog farms. A 2008 investigation into the Korean dog meat trade by the Korean Animal Welfare Association (KARA) identified severe welfare issues associated with intensive breeding and farming of dogs:

*“Investigators documented dogs held in extremely cramped cages denying the dogs any opportunity to live as a social group without fear, aggression and fighting. As a result many dogs on these farms demonstrated symptoms of physical disease and mental distress due to lack of disease control and cumulative stressors, causing significant signs of depression, frustration, aggression, fighting and repetitive behaviours.*

*“Some dogs were without shelter, left in the rain, wind and extremely hot sun, and observed in conditions of extreme stress due to climatic exposure. Signs of disease on farms were evident, consistent with suspected infectious tracheobronchitis, parvovirus and distemper.*

*“The food supplied to dogs consists of food waste or remains of human consumption, discharged as rubbish from restaurants. In addition, some farms appear to recycle dead pups, grind them into a slurry for dog food. The feeding of same species animals (or animal tissue in feed) has been associated with the development of livestock diseases such as scrapie and bovine spongiform encephalopathy leading to human infection.*

*“In an effort to control disease and losses, the farms resort to indiscriminate use and misuse of antibiotics.”* **Korean Dog Meat Report 2008 by Korean Animal Welfare Association**

In China there was a push to industrialise the dog-meat trade with large-scale farms particularly in the north in the 1990s. Due to an inability to control the outbreak of disease and high overhead costs many of these businesses failed. Dogs are now raised on smallholdings with farmers sending dogs directly to market or operating through a network of middlemen who gather dogs in the countryside and transport them to city centres. These smallholdings vary in size from a handful of dogs to over 200.

Their nightmare continues with a long road journey by truck which often lasts for several days, throughout which the animals have no free access to food or water, and only an occasional cursory hose down to prevent dehydration and death. Crushed into tiny mesh cages which are piled three, four or even five cages high, one hears their anguished screams from the road before the truck turns the corner and arrives at the wholesale market. The drivers climb the pyramid of cages, before hurling each one several metres to the ground, crushing limbs and paws and smashing faces of the terrified prisoners as the cages crash to the concrete. Using crude metal tongs which clamp the choking dogs and cats around the neck (or sometimes miss and stab into the soft palate), the traders then either hurl them into larger cages for weighing and onward sale, or offload them into pens. Once on solid ground the trembling animals urinate, defecate and literally fall on any available water bowls in the pens to quench a 3 day thirst, visibly relieved that the pain has stopped and hopeful that their nightmare is over.

However, their nightmare has only just begun and their relief is short-lived as customers walk by, choose their victim, and the tongs grip once again. The screaming animals are then bludgeoned in front of the other terrified dogs with a blow across the muzzle, using an instrument resembling a baseball bat.

Tragically, the blow is not hard enough to render the poor animals unconscious for long – they regain consciousness within seconds, completely bewildered, and try to get up, sliding around in the blood and crashing into other dogs also flailing around. At this point they are howling pitifully in pain and confusion, with blood and mucus pouring from their nose and mouth – only to be bludgeoned again and again.

In amongst all this carnage, the other dogs and cats are looking on, knowing that their turn is soon to come. We also see cats and dogs giving birth from within the cages, from which they will eventually be dragged out and slaughtered – and the tiny crying offspring are thrown to other dogs that are literally starving and eat the kittens and puppies alive. The Animals Asia team has rescued these new born puppies and kittens on two occasions and taken them to a local veterinary surgeon who, tragically, has been unable to save them owing to sickness or disease.

The eyes of the dogs and cats follow our every move as we walk around taking photographs, helpless to intervene, crying into the camera lens, but trying to smile at the same time, to avoid any negative reaction from the traders who now realise why we are there. There is only one question in these animals' eyes....."Why?"

It breaks our hearts to see dogs feebly wag their tail when we approach, or cats who rub their heads against our fingers – both species so desperately wanting to be our friend, yet so bewildered with the suffering and pain they experience at the hands of humankind. You see dogs seconds before slaughter ingratiate themselves to the killer – tail wagging, head bowed, begging for life. How can we sink so low in this appalling treatment of animals who have so rightly earned their place as our best friend – it's enough to put you off the human race for life.

## DOGS AND CATS IN TRADITIONAL MEDICINE



Vacuum-packed dog meat and instant dog-meat sauce.



Dried dog penises in a traditional medicine market in China.

In China, dog meat is consumed as a tonic food, providing warmth in the winter months, as well as helping cure fatigue, low back pain, poor memory and slow digestion in older men. (Interestingly and paradoxically, in the same continent, dog meat is eaten in South Korea during the summer months to cool the body down.) Dog skin and gallstones are used to invigorate the body or heal sickness, dog penis and testes are used for impotence and lowered sex drive, and dog kidney is consumed to cure impotence and premature ejaculation. The bones of dogs are sometimes used as an alternative to tiger bone to treat rheumatism. At least one company in Jiangsu Province is attempting to market "dog brain powder" as a treatment for various neurological disorders.

There is no scientific evidence to support any of these claims, or other beliefs that dog meat can improve blood flow and "chi". Dog meat has been proven to be no more nutritious than pork or chicken. Transport and slaughter conditions are so completely unhygienic that these markets may represent a grave public health hazard. Researchers now believe that SARS began its human-to-human transition in these live animal markets, where cages piled high with dogs and cats are crammed into the same market space as many wild species, such as civet cats, snakes, barking deer and countless others. As if that were not enough, teams of dog killers throughout Jiangxi Province have been known to poison dogs with cyanide before bringing them to market to sell their meat to unsuspecting consumers.

Cat meat is eaten during the winter months in China "to warm the stomach" and delicacies include paws (stir fried with garlic), eyes, stomach and testicles. Cat meat is often eaten as an aphrodisiac, or to help cure arthritis. In Korea, this "medical tonic" (Goyangi Soju) is made by boiling cats alive in a large pressure cooker. A popular dish in China is called 'Long Fu Fung' (Dragon, Tiger, Phoenix Soup). The Dragon is represented by the snake, the Tiger by the cat and the Phoenix by the chicken. Cat consumption has historically been confined to parts of Guangdong Province in Southern China, but has recently spread to other parts of China due to the popularisation of Guangdong restaurants and cuisine. An investigation in Shanghai revealed through DNA testing that in several restaurants across the city, cat meat was being passed off as mutton.

Recent research into rheumatoid arthritis has proven that cat meat is not effective in the treatment of this illness. Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioner Dr. Lo Yan Wo states, "In traditional Chinese medicine there are many alternatives to the use of these animals. Culture should not be an excuse for cruelty and when we are making progress in civilisation, we should also make progress in our hearts and minds. There is no need to kill and eat our faithful animal friends."

## **DOG & CAT CONSUMPTION AND DISEASE TRANSMISSION TO HUMANS**

There are significant health risks associated with the farming, slaughter and consumption of dogs. Farms provide optimal conditions for microbes to reproduce, effecting animals in a weakened state due to the poor health and welfare conditions associated with dog breeding for consumption. The trade and movement of dogs over large areas increase the risk of disease transmission. There are a number of pathogens associated with the dog meat industry; the most recently documented include cholera, rabies, and trichinellosis.

**Cholera:** Following a Cholera outbreak in Vietnam in 2008 the World Health Organisation's representative in Vietnam, Jean-Marc Olive, warned that eating dog meat, or other food from outlets that serve it, is linked to a 20-fold increase in the risk of developing the severe, acute, watery diarrhoea commonly caused by the cholera bacterium. In 2009 seven provinces and cities in the northern and central regions had announced patients positive for the cholera bacterium. On May 13, the Hanoi Health Department declared it had found the cholera bacterium in five samples of dog meat taken from four slaughterhouses in Ha Dong district.

**Rabies:** Research published in March 2009 in the open access journal PLoS Medicine, Dr Heiman Wertheim and colleagues from the National Institute of Infectious and Tropical Diseases and the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology in Hanoi, Vietnam, report on two patients admitted to hospital showing signs of rabies infection. Neither patient was thought to have been bitten by a rabid animal in the preceding months. When the researchers investigated whether the patients had come into contact with infected animals, they found that both had been involved in preparing and eating animals that may have been infected. In the first patient's case, he had prepared and eaten a dog that had been killed in a road traffic accident. The second patient had butchered and eaten a cat that had been sick for a number of days. In both cases seen by Dr Wertheim and colleagues, it is thought that infection occurred during the slaughtering, and not by eating the meat. <http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/News/Media-office/Press-releases/2009/WTX053776.htm>

A 2008 study into the increase in rabies incidents in three Southern Chinese cities, published in the journal Emerging Infectious Diseases in August 2009 analysed brain specimens from dogs used for meat consumption in restaurants, suspected rabid dogs, and from humans with rabies. The authors concluded that the spread of rabies viruses from high-incidence regions, particularly by long-distance movement or transprovincial translocation of dogs caused by human-related activities, may be one cause of the recent massive human rabies epidemics in southern China.

Rabies was linked to two human fatalities in the Philippines in 2006. In both cases most of the meat was cooked, but it was not clear whether the victims were infected by cooked meat or by raw tidbits.

**Trichinellosis:** This is caused by eating raw or undercooked meat of animals infected with the larvae of a species of worm called Trichinella. ProMed-mail, a program of the International Society for Infectious Diseases, reported on 16th July 2009 that five people had contracted trichinosis due to consumption of stray dog meat in Zabaykalsky Krai, Siberia. In 2009, nine cases were reported in this region, and dog meat was the cause of infection for all of them. ProMED-mail also reported an outbreak caused by the consumption of dog meat in 2005 in Buryatiya (Russia).

## **ANIMAL WELFARE LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

In China no animal welfare legislation exists – in fact it has lagged behind the industrialised world in legislation against animal cruelty for more than 180 years and is some 40 years behind India in the implementation of an animal welfare law. (In the last few years we have heard from some government

officials that they believe the term “animal welfare” was introduced into Chinese after we began meeting together way back in the early 1990s.) Thankfully, an animal protection law is now being drafted by a group of leading Chinese law academics for the purpose of promoting public discussion within China with a long term goal of addressing deliberate cruelty to animals.

At this time, it is important to note that where countries in Asia ARE introducing animal welfare acts, they are often banning the consumption of dogs and cats too in recognition of their importance as a central component of any civilised and evolving society.

The Philippines introduced the Animal Welfare Act in 1998 (formally known as Republic Act 8485) under which the slaughtering of dogs and cats for food was declared illegal.

Taiwan followed suit in 2003, banning the practice of dog eating, by amending and improving their Animal Protection Law of 2001 to prohibit the slaughter and sale of dogs (and other companion animals) as food. The Taiwan Animal Protection Law covers the treatment of all animals: domestic, wild and livestock. Fines against those who flout the rules range from NT\$2,000 to NT\$2,500,000 and in certain cases abuses can lead to imprisonment.

In Hong Kong it has been illegal to slaughter dogs and cats for food since 1950. Under the Dogs & Cats Regulations Chapter 167 it states that, “It is an offence to eat or have in possession any part of a cat or dog for the purpose for food whether for mankind or otherwise.”

Both the Philippines and Taiwan have won international praise and approval for their comprehensive animal welfare laws, and as more and more Asian countries table the issue of animal welfare legislation for discussion, it is essential that China does not allow itself to be left behind. (Of concern, the Philippine legislation is now seeing certain lawmakers determined to once again add dog meat to the menu, but they are also facing fierce objection by the local Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) which was largely responsible for seeing the original law enacted.)

So today, any moves towards “regulating” the slaughter of dogs and cats in China (i.e. sanctioning so - called “humane” slaughter), would completely undermine those laws and regulations mentioned above, and would also undermine decades of negotiation and efforts by those groups in Asia who have so tirelessly worked with the Governments concerned to have them introduced and enforced.

Regulating the trade would also provide only a superficial solution and give dog and cat eating a façade of respectability, while allowing the suffering to continue behind closed doors. Does anyone seriously believe that even if “humane” slaughter laws or regulations were introduced in China that they would urgently be implemented or enforced? According to a local veterinary surgeon in Beijing, this is a country where, despite endeavours towards advancing veterinary science, the actual knowledge and standards overall are at least 30 years behind the western countries.

## **DOGS, CATS AND LIVESTOCK**

Arguments that a dog is no different to a chicken, a cow or even a frog, fail to address the core fact that no government in any country has devised a way of killing dogs humanely for commercial purposes. In fact, a Hong Kong Government Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department Veterinary representative has stated that dogs cannot be humanely raised and slaughtered for food.

We certainly don't want to imply that livestock animals don't suffer – they do – but, as carnivores, dogs and cats are inherently different in temperament and physiology to most domestic livestock species more commonly raised intensively for food. Humans have historically never kept carnivores as livestock animals, partly because of the difficulty in raising them and perhaps also because of the increased risk of disease. Dogs are pack animals and hierarchy is important: in the markets, crammed into cages, the competition for food, females in season, and the stress of seeing other dogs slaughtered in front of them, leads to aggression and fighting. Equipped with efficient canine teeth – carnivore attacking carnivore – they are seen tearing into each other, inflicting horrific wounds, when small amounts of food are tossed in

by the traders in order to keep them barely alive. In addition, disease is rife in the markets and many of the dogs and cats show clear, clinical signs of sickness.

We have to make a start somewhere and dogs and cats are ideal ambassadors through which to spread an underlying message of respect for all animals. If one can feel compassion for an individual animal (and one deemed to be a “best friend” of human society) , then hopefully this compassion will expand to include an entire species and eventually lend itself to the better treatment of all animals.

## DOGS AND CATS IN CHINESE CULTURE AND SOCIETY



Animals Asia's Detective Dog Simba at work in Korea.



Pet ownership is exploding in China.

Culture and tradition should not be excuses for cruelty. The argument that a certain practice is historically part of a culture does not make it acceptable and this argument in itself is incongruous, as in many of the places where dogs are eaten the practice is less than a few generations old. In Korea in fact, contrary to popular belief, dog eating is a relatively recent phenomenon and has never been a part of a long-standing culinary history as the traders would have us believe. The fabrication of dog and cat meat as an age-old part of Korean cultural heritage is a clever marketing strategy by unscrupulous vendors who are exploiting an easy to produce commodity.

*"Culture has often been used as an excuse to turn away from suffering and people in both Asia and the West often use cultural relativism to soothe their conscience for doing nothing. Surely we want to regard various practices in our history (such as slavery and cannibalism) as something to be rid of rather than treat them as 'culture' and demand respect accordingly? In Asia where people regard friendship and*



*loyalty as prominent virtues, we should work towards a society where love and respect are celebrated."*  
**Sung Su Kim, Korean animal welfare activist**

Today, dogs are increasingly being recognised within China as friendly, loyal and even crucial members of family and society. Changing family demographics, such as childless couples and increasing numbers of elderly people living alone, mean that more and more people are turning to dogs for companionship and support. As a result, pet ownership is booming, with just over 150 million pet dogs throughout the nation – one for every nine people. Now employed as sniffer dogs at airports and railway stations in China, dogs are also proving invaluable - and cheap – assistants for law enforcement.

Contrary to public perception, pet keeping is not purely a Western practice: the earliest known reference to Pekingese dogs was in the 8th century Tang Dynasty in China, where they were held sacred for nearly one thousand years, making them the world's first pet dogs. (Cats were common in China by 500 BC.) Scientific studies have emerged recently that indicate nearly all dogs, from toy poodles to mastiffs, are descended from three female wolves tamed in China 15,000 years ago. Historically, dog eating in China was never widespread, but rather confined to a handful of clans who consumed dog meat for religious reasons.

Dogs and other companion animals also provide an important financial, as well as emotional, contribution to China: according to the Beijing Kennel Club, pet owners in the city spend more than 500 million RMB on their pets a year. Experts estimate that the market potential for the "pet economy" could reach a minimum of 15 billion RMB, far exceeding the economic potential of the trade in dog meat.

In recognition of the important role that dogs play in society, city departments in Beijing reduced the license fee from 5,000 RMB to 1,000 RMB, as of October 15, 2003. Subsequently the number of registered dogs shot up to 900,000 citywide in 2009, roughly 90 per cent of the total number of dogs in the capital – 730,000 of which are now vaccinated against rabies.

In Guangzhou, the authorities initiated new regulations in September 2006 in recognition of the growing pet boom and in recognition that there were over 100,000 dogs in the city of Guangzhou, but only 842 dogs registered. Most owners weren't getting their dogs registered because of the prohibitively high fees and didn't get them vaccinated against rabies either for fear that they would be caught evading registration. So the government wisely cut the initial registration down from 10,000 RMB to 500 RMB and yearly registration from 6,000 RMB to 300 RMB – as well as reducing these figures by 50 per cent for special needs people in the community and for those who had desexed their dogs. From our meeting with Guangzhou Public Security Bureau in 2009, the number of registered dogs was at 50,000.

Aside from having more people now registering their dogs, the Guangzhou Government knew that this would in fact save them money and resources in that they would not need to pay so much for staff to round up dogs, run shelters for the dogs, or pay for food and management for the dogs.

Moreover, these new pet owners are speaking out against dog eating, highlighting the fact that the strongest voice against the practice is coming from within China itself, not simply as a result of "foreign" influence.

*"I want to smash every dog restaurant in the city...But really I don't think it's necessary. The dog restaurants are disappearing fast," she said. "Young Chinese have very different attitudes towards animals, they really love dogs." Li Xuefeng quoted in BBC (January 29, 2006)*

## **BENEFITS OF HUMAN-ANIMAL INTERACTION**

More people are acknowledging the inherent bond we have with companion animals and how they can help us across the world. Dogs are a species that help and protect us in times of war, they help and protect us in our own home – and deserve more than being killed as food for our table.

Throughout the world dogs are being used in increasingly sophisticated roles to benefit humankind: today, dogs work their hearts out as guide dogs for the blind; hearing dogs for the deaf; police and army dogs; and as sniffer dogs searching out bombs, narcotics and illegal wildlife products, or people lost in landslides, avalanches and earthquakes. Dogs have even been trained to dive underwater to locate drowning victims. Nowhere was the heroism of dogs more obvious than during the earthquake in Sichuan Province, China in May 2008, where dogs were working side by side with their human heroes rescuing the victims of this terrible tragedy which saw the loss of some 90,000 lives. Surely then, as we acknowledge these positive aspects of sharing our lives with dogs, we must also acknowledge that dogs deserve better. Surely now is the time that we give them something back and explore humane ways of combating a disease which causes great suffering to humans and dogs alike.

The ability of dogs to detect illegal goods is remarkable when compared to the ability of law enforcement officers alone – 36 Customs officers would be required to carry out a cursory examination in the same time it would take one dog and one handler to carry out a thorough examination of all passengers and baggage on a Boeing 747. While humans have only 5 million olfactory cells, dogs are many times more sensitive to smells – they have more nasal membranes and over 200 million olfactory receptors.

In 2003, following the publication of a book by Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej, which suggested homeless dogs should be given jobs, the Thai police force successfully trained up 100 ex-street dogs to sniff out illicit drugs at train stations and airports. These dogs were even used to detect victims of the 2005 Tsunami tragedy. Interestingly, this incredible development happened in a country that previously had a major dog-eating problem in the northern tribal areas.

Medical sniffer dogs have the ability to alert humans to the onset of an epileptic seizure and even reduce the frequency of seizures, as well as alerting humans to low blood sugar levels and heart attacks by detecting otherwise unnoticeable chemical and behavioural changes. Incredibly, these alert dogs have even been trained to call 911 on their own, in the event of a medical emergency.

Recent small-scale studies of a dog's ability to detect the chemical markers of cancer, specifically melanoma, have shown promising results. The phenomenon was first briefly reported in 1989 in the British journal *The Lancet* and, since then, preliminary evidence has been accumulating that suggests dogs may indeed be able to differentiate between healthy skin cells and cancerous ones. New studies are also proving that dogs can detect signs of prostate cancer in urine samples earlier than conventional tests, and can also determine people with lung cancer through smelling their breath!

Companion animals are also proven to play a critical role in early socialisation: children who care for animals are more likely to develop into emotionally healthy adults empowered with a sense of compassion and the ability to empathise – essential skills in maintaining harmony in any society. Pets are an effective medium of communication and growth for children as they can help to encourage the development of nurturing relationships, improve confidence and self-esteem and widen the scope of a child's viewpoint.

## ANIMAL THERAPY



Dr Dali makes a new friend at an orphanage in China.



Doctor Dogs visit a cancer patient in China.

Animal therapy is a flexible concept that can be tailored to meet the needs of specific sectors of the community as well as individuals. Improvements in health amongst geriatric, paediatric, psychiatric and rehabilitation patients are attributed to the increase in communication, social interaction and sensory stimulation provided by the visiting dogs.

Based on clinical studies, researchers across the world have consistently shown that repeated interaction with a companion animal has beneficial long-term physical and psychological effects. The benefits to society in embracing companion animals are manifold: numerous studies in Europe, Australia and America have shown that pet owners have lower blood pressure and lower cholesterol levels, as well as a considerably reduced risk of heart disease than non-pet owners.

One US study showed that elderly people who have pets visit their doctor 16% less than those who do not have pets. Dog owners receive the greatest benefits as on average they visit their doctor 21% less often than non-pet owners do. New research by Warwick University has revealed that people who own either a dog or cat are happier and healthier and live longer than those who don't.

Other studies show that dog and cat owners exercise 35% more often per week than non dog or cat owners, and sleep better too. They have less than half the doctor visits and less than half the days off sick from work. All this has been shown in a recent paper by Bruce Headey who pointed out the actual benefits of pet dog ownership in China.

Another study in China jointly conducted by the Psychology of Beijing Normal University and Companion Animal Research and Information Centre (CARIC), concluded that pet owners have better physical and mental health than non-pet owners.

And of course, numerous studies in Europe, Australia, and America conclude that pet owners have lower blood pressure and lower cholesterol levels as well as considerably reduced risk of heart disease than non pet owners. So now we know that the presence of dogs is scientifically, irrefutably, doing us good.

*“The human-pet bond is one of attachment and loyalty. When we as a society pay attention to it, we can also benefit from it by improving the quality of life for at least some social strata in very tangible ways. Hopefully our research can help the government in its pet-related regulations.”*

**Professor Zheng Richang, Beijing Normal University**

Embracing dogs as an integral part of our society also has long-term ramifications in the control or reduction of national healthcare costs. Studies by Professor Bruce Headey, at the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic & Social Research, puts the amount of national savings in Australia or Germany at billions of dollars.

## DOCTOR DOG



Jill Robinson and Dr Eddie spreading love and laughter.



Professor Jinxiang Li, Head of a Chinese Cancer Hospice.

Animals Asia's successful Dr Dog animal therapy programme sees over 250 dedicated volunteers and their dogs visiting hospitals, disabled centres, elderly homes, orphanages and schools spreading warmth and love to people in need across Asia. Dr Dog operates in Hong Kong, Japan, India, the Philippines, Taiwan, China and Malaysia.

In Hong Kong, where Dr Dog has been running for nearly 20 years, we hear residents of old people's homes saying they thought nothing of eating dogs in the past, but are now having their eyes opened as they begin to enjoy the company and love of animals that bring so much joy into their lives. In China, where we now have Dr Dog operating in Guangzhou (the dog eating capital of the country), Shenzhen and Chengdu, the story is the same and with the help of enlightened doctors, carers and journalists who understand the benefits of animal therapy, major inroads are being made to turn the tide.

Thanks to a very forward-thinking doctor – Professor Jinxiang Li of The Department of Palliative Care, West China Fourth Hospital of Sichuan University (who, from the start, encouraged dogs in his hospice for cancer care, despite the knowledge that it might not be a popular choice with some of the patients or staff), Dr. Dog is proving immensely successful. Launched in Chengdu in November 2004, the reaction was nothing short of amazing. One of our canine ambassadors that day was Dr Dali – who was previously a starving, naked and pathetic little street dog we rescued in Yunnan Province and who, with tender loving care, blossomed into a beautiful little Shih-tzu cross. Patients who were critically ill stretched out their hands to stroke their unique four-legged "doctor", or sat up in bed watching other patients interacting with these wonderful ambassadors.

The media were overwhelmed by the reaction of patients and staff during this first visit. Over 20 TV stations aired the story, and over 100 local and national newspapers printed articles describing the remarkable health benefits of being in close contact with companion animals. The whole idea of animal therapy is a totally new concept in China and people are astonished that dogs really can help people! As a result, we have been inundated with calls from organisations across China requesting visits and from dog owners enquiring how to join.

*"The delight that Dr Dog brings to our patients can never be done by medicine."*

**Professor Jinxiang Li, Department of Palliative Care, West China Fourth Hospital of Sichuan University**

Through this project, the dogs' owners are also being empowered to speak out against the consumption of companion animals and are encouraging their friends and colleagues to understand that dogs and cats are our friends, not food.

## PROFESSOR PAWS



Professor Paws teaches love for all animals.



Professor Schneider with two newly graduated Pet Cadets.

Building on the widespread success of Dr Dog, we also launched a brand new programme in Hong Kong entitled Professor Paws, which sees our Dr Dogs taking on an exciting new role as “Professors” to teach local primary children the importance of companion animals, compassion for all living creatures, safety around dogs and responsible pet care. Children take part in specially designed lessons, which aim to develop and improve their English language skills and confidence, while encouraging them to make a difference as “Pet Cadets” and give a voice to dogs and other animals.

Research has shown that dogs can be instrumental in improving the learning skills of a wide variety of children in an effective, unique and most importantly, a fun manner.

Close interaction with dogs is proven to increase self-confidence and pro-social behaviour amongst students, whilst encouraging the development of compassion and widening their scope of experience. It doesn't even matter if the dog falls asleep – the teacher can say that Professor Paws is just resting his eyes!

Over 2,000 children from 15 local primary schools have already participated in the programme and the response from students, teachers and parents alike has been overwhelmingly positive. The recognition of animals as sentient beings is a powerful step towards initiating positive changes in attitudes and encourages the development of compassion and empathy towards all living things. By enabling children to have direct, positive contact with companion animals, we can promote another positive example of the many ways that companion animals can enrich our lives, while directly investing in a new generation of responsible, caring citizens.

In 2008 Professor Paws was launched in mainland China – and best of all the first school visits were in Guangzhou – known as China’s dog and cat eating capital. At the end of 2009, over 2,500 children had taken part in Professor Paws lessons at 14 schools in Guangzhou and Chengdu and the Guangzhou team held the first Professor Paws Fun Day in mainland China, with more than 1,200 children joining in. The mainland China programme is a little different from the Hong Kong programme, consisting of two lessons conducted in Cantonese, and slotting into the school timetable as part of the cultural and moral education curriculum. The promotion of empathy for dogs, and by extension all animals, is still very much at the core of this groundbreaking programme.

## OUR VISION... . AND MORE SOLUTIONS



"Dr Eddie: Friend or Food" – the movie!

Some years ago, the Animals Asia team rescued a little yellow dog that was seconds from slaughter in a live animal market in Guangzhou. We brought him back to Hong Kong, enrolled him into our Dr Dog programme and then produced a film about his life: "Dr. Eddie: Friend or Food". The film sees Eddie tell the story of his journey from "meat dog" to Doctor Dog from his perspective....flashing back to the ghastly market where he escaped with his life, and now utterly enchanting everyone he meets – and ending with the plea "We want to help you, will you help us?"

The film is available in three languages (Mandarin, Cantonese and English) and we have enlisted the help of Chinese dog-loving celebrities (including Chinese Superstar Richie Jen Xian Qi who gives Eddie his human voice!) who say they are appalled and ashamed of dog-eating, Traditional Chinese doctors (debunking the myth that dog meat has healthy or healing qualities), Chinese chefs who say they would never cook dog, as well as Chinese nurses and doctors in hospitals, who express their disgust at dog eating and instead praise the qualities of the doctor dogs.

We have focused on distributing the film to pet clubs (which are mushrooming across China), and welfare groups, in fact anyone who will be encouraged to join our "voice" for dogs and cats and speak out against their slaughter - whether for food or for fur.

The "Dr. Eddie Video Education Pack" includes a VCD, a "Friends or Food" leaflet explaining reasons for our love and respect for companion animals and why we believe that dogs and cats should not be food, our current Dr Dog leaflet and a basic pet care leaflet. Distribution kicked off with 1,000 copies of the film being given away during a pet carnival in Shenzhen on Christmas Day 2004, where the theme the local animal welfare group promoted was: *"Is a Dog a Friend for Life, or Just a Tasty Dish?"* In 2005, an amazing 41,000 copies of the film were snapped up by animal lovers across China. A further 47,000 VCDs of the film were given away in the March 2006 issue of influential pet magazine Pet Life, which circulates across China.

Today (2010) the film continues to be given away to all who ask thanks to the generosity of supporters who fund the production of a continuous supply of the VCDs.



Life-size cut-out of megastar Richie Jen and Eddie promote dogs and cats as our friends and helpers!

Meanwhile life-size boards of megastar Richie Jen posing with Eddie, promoting the message that *"Dogs and cats are our friends and helpers"* are being distributed to vet clinics and supermarkets in Guangzhou and Chengdu!



Encouraged by this, we've now agreed to fund local groups in China with their own public education programmes so that they can hold exhibits and pass out flyers and leaflets, encouraging the general public to be more compassionate to companion animals and to encourage more interest from their local media for stories to circulate more widely across the country.

In January 2006, we helped Jia Meng and members of the Chinese Companion Animal Protection Network as they organised and coordinated an event in Guangzhou entitled “*Stopping Eating Cats and Dogs*” which was the first time that local citizens spoke so broadly on this issue. It was later reported as a cover story in the Guangzhou newspaper “Nan Fang Du Shi Bao (Southern Capital News), with a circulation of 1,560,000!

In March 2006, also in Guangzhou (remember, the dog-eating capital of the country), we held the largest symposium of its kind in China. With over 25 local animal-welfare groups across the country attending, we encouraged everyone present to raise their voices even louder for dogs and cats that year – the Chinese Year of the Dog. Government officials were invited to attend, together with spokespersons from China and abroad, in a conference which ended with various voted resolutions to pass on to the media and high level Government departments – two of which called for the end of dog and cat consumption and the trade in their fur. Since then we have held two more Companion Animal Symposiums in China – each bigger than the last and involving nearly 50 animal welfare groups, veterinary surgeries, academics and officials – all supporting the call for the end of dog and cat slaughter and for ending the consumption of their meat and fur.

In the winter of 2009/2010 Animals Asia launched another anti-dog and cat eating campaign “Do not eat dogs and cats and be nice to your animal friends” across China. The message promoted a respect for animals and called for a change in people’s habit of eating dogs and cats. Two posters were designed for city and country, with leaflets and display boards freely available for the animal welfare groups to support their local events.





每年秋冬季节，很多流浪猫狗甚至是家养猫狗都会离奇消失或被发现中毒死亡，而另一方面我们也会发现，许多地方的餐馆已经悄悄的上起了狗餐猪肉的招牌……这些和我们朝夕相处的小动物们其实都是惨死在了那些残忍又血腥的猪肉摊子手里，大量家养或流浪猫狗被非法贩卖、毒杀、抢夺，最终被残忍宰杀，成为餐桌上的一道菜。

**拒绝残忍，反对虐杀**

这些猫狗从被拐、被关入铁笼拥挤的笼子、尾巴和脚被夹断、没吃没喝、长途运输颠簸途中怀孕的猫狗生下的小猫小狗从缝隙掉出、过于拥挤的环境让狗狗相互打架受伤。猫狗被屠宰的方法非常残忍，许多猫和狗要经历漫长而痛苦的折磨，然后才悲惨地死去。它们的喉咙被铁棍戳住，它们被人用铁棒敲击头部，用利器开喉或被刀刺透腹部，被电击、被烫死，或者还可能被活活扔到开水里烫死。其状惨不忍睹、触目惊心！



猫狗很通人性，它们的智商相当于一个十几岁的孩子，它们在被捕获、运输、屠宰的过程中会感受到无比的恐惧、绝望和痛苦，是我们所不能想象的凶残残酷。它们很多原本是人类家庭重要的家庭成员，是主人或爱心人士花了大量的精力、时间和财力把它们从小喂养大的，对这些猫狗的情感就像对待孩子一样，多少会让爱狗人士因猫狗被杀、虐待或在精神上受到极大的伤害。



食用猫狗肉，等于助长了这些残忍，等于助长了那些非法屠杀猫狗行为！

**从健康和卫生角度，不宜食用猫狗**

食用猫狗对人体健康也潜在极大的危害，猫狗以及其他许多被宰杀的动物都没有经过任何部门的检验检疫，是不卫生的，食用它们极不安全。事实上，科学研究已经证实猫狗肉并不比其他食物更有营养，也并不比我们脚掌。反而作为食用动物的猫狗具有更多人畜共患病，这些疾病很可能会通过食用猫狗而传播到人体身上。

Twenty-eight groups and individuals requested our leaflets and posters, with a total of 32,890 leaflets, 3,560 posters, and 700 DVD distributed across the country. Thirty-three groups joined us in signing their names on letters distributed to the media, and 18 groups coordinated different activities to promote anti-dog and cat-eating. For example:

Nan Ning Stray Cat Rescue Forum held a bike riding activity with our poster on their backs and the local media following them all the way!



Shi Jia Zhuang Mi Ai Stray Cat saw their volunteers driving around the downtown area with "anti-dog and cat eating" banners. They even burned the fur on the street, with several media outlets reporting on their actions.



Guang Yuan Small Animal Protection Center held a road show in the downtown area of the city.



Wuhan Stray Dog Rescue Center held a road show in the downtown area, walking through the city with posters advertising that dogs and cats are friends, not food.



Xi An Xi Jing Companion Animal Rescue Center distributed leaflets on the street.

- ☒ Zhang Zhou Small Animal Protection Center held an activity on 1 January 2009
- ☒ Xi'an Red Guave Companion Animal Rescue Center held a bike riding activity.

And most exciting of all:

- ☒ Home of Love and Guangyuan Boai Small Animal Protection Center closed down illegal slaughter facilities.

Ten or 15 years ago, all this would have been an impossible task, but today in China, so much is different. People tend to think, "but China is such huge country – the culture is so ingrained. What can you do?" Yes, China is a massive country, and perhaps one cannot change the mind of a die-hard older villager who has eaten dog his entire life, but with the youth, who are aspiring to be different, we have a real window of opportunity.

China is changing so fast, modernisation escalating at breathtaking speed, and a new awareness of animals – and their welfare – connecting with a new generation of informed and passionate people. Besides the local animal lovers, the media is also playing an important and fundamental role in the change of people's attitudes and again it reflects upon the way we show solutions to the media that helps us to drive our message home of respect for all animals. Although its early days, we believe that our "Friends or Food" campaign can work – and, more importantly, people within China believe it can too.

There has never been a better opportunity for reaching out – extending the message so that attitudes can change and gradually a new consensus on the goodness of dogs and cats as our friends and helpers – and not food – can emerge and prevail. To borrow from Mahatma Gandhi, animal lovers in China are being the change they want to see.