

# Cat and Dog Welfare

## The issue

Cats and dogs in China are often abandoned and left to subsist on the streets, with many dying due to illness or accidents. Government authorities organize brutal dog-killing campaigns to try to reduce stray dog populations. Stray dogs and cats are also snatched from the streets and taken to horrific meat markets, where they are sold for human consumption and often suffer a slow, violent death.

## Focus areas

**Animals Asia's work to improve cat and dog welfare focuses on five key areas:**

### 1 Empowering local groups

We provide funding and training to over 150 animal welfare groups in China that rescue dogs and cats and undertake other welfare initiatives that directly help companion animals. We run conferences for the leaders of these groups, allowing problems and solutions to be debated and discussed.

Our support enables these groups to introduce TNR (trap, neuter, release) programs for street cats into their communities and to produce publicity and information materials for promotional events. We also give workshops and veterinary training to groups where appropriate.

### 2 Humane population management

We promote humane population management and disease-control measures by running symposiums and providing funds and training for TNR programs for street cats.

We sponsor officials and animal welfare groups from around China to attend our "Humane Dog Management" and "Humane Stray Cat Management" symposiums and learn effective and humane methods to control stray populations.

We work with individual cities to offer advice on issues such as responsible ownership, de-sexing, rabies vaccinations and registration of dogs, as well as to help introduce and implement TNR for cats.

### 3 The meat trade

We conduct investigations into live animal markets, dog slaughterhouses and restaurants across China to catalog abuse and inform the government and public of the cruelty, illegality and human health concerns surrounding the industry.

In China, Animals Asia's field officers regularly visit and document the horrific facilities that drive the cruel, and often illegal, trade in cats and dogs for their meat.

We gather key information and evidence about the markets, slaughterhouses and restaurants – investigation reports, photographs and film where possible – to help us highlight our concerns to the relevant authorities and encourage their support for change.

We use this information to bring the cruelty of the meat trade to the attention of the public through community awareness campaigns, photo displays and banners, and media interviews.

### 4 Public awareness

We run extensive public awareness campaigns on cat and dog issues and use a number of innovative methods to spread the message that dogs and cats are our friends not food.

We promote messages of animal welfare and companionship, through a host of awareness-raising initiatives including petition campaigns, animal photography competitions, country-wide actions with cyclists displaying vivid poster boards, and educational workshops.

We use animal ambassadors to create empathy for all animals through our animal-assisted therapy programs, Dr Dog and Professor Paws, which are now thriving in three mainland Chinese cities and Hong Kong.

Since its launch in 1991, Dr Dog has spread to 10 cities across Asia and sees registered dogs make regular visits to hospitals, disabled centers, schools and elderly homes, bringing comfort and love to those in need.



## 5 Government and policy

We engage with government authorities, public representatives and policy-makers in China to support an end to dog and cat eating and to build support for laws that will protect companion animals from cruelty.

We work with local authorities around China to provide advice on humane population management for both strays and family pets. We run symposiums and workshops to share best practice, working with individual city authorities to offer advice on issues such as de-sexing, rabies vaccination and registration, as well as to help introduce and implement TNR schemes for cats. We also run responsible dog ownership courses utilizing animal ambassadors from our Dr Dog and Professor Paws programs.

We provide the relevant authorities with evidence gathered from our visits to live animal markets to ensure they are aware of the cruelty that takes place. We encourage stronger enforcement of current regulations and, alongside other animal welfare groups, campaign for the introduction of animal protection legislation in China.

