

Facts about the dog meat trade in South Korea

- South Korea is the only country in the world known to solely raise dogs on intensive dog farming facilities to supply the demand for dog meat and associated products.
- The exact number of farms is unknown, but it is estimated that between 2 and 2.5 million dogs are slaughtered for human consumption each year in South Korea, on thousands of dog farms throughout the country, ranging in size from small backyard enterprises to large-scale industrialized farms housing more than 1,000 dogs.
- These dogs live in small, barren cages, exposed to all of the elements, given just enough food to survive. Some are housed alone, others in crowded cages. Many suffer from disease, injury and/or malnutrition and all are subject to terrible, daily neglect and sometimes, direct cruelty.
- Dog meat traders purchase dogs from the farms to sell to dog meat markets, or restaurants.
- In 2018, Pyeongchang will host the Winter Olympics. The South Korean government is aware of the international spotlight on them in the years leading up to the event.

Humane Society International's work to close dog meat farms in South Korea

- Humane Society International (HSI) has been in South Korea since December 2014. Since then, the organization has made agreements with six farmers for permanent closure of their farms; with the help of HSI, all of the farmers transitioned into humane, alternative businesses, such as crop-growing or scrap metal. Click [here](#) for more information on our past farm closures.
- HSI closed down the sixth farm in January 2017, and rescued the 200 dogs it held. The farm, located in Wonju, is in Gangwon province which is the province where the 2018 Winter Olympics will be held. The owner of this farm approached HSI after being urged by her daughter to give up the business and transition to another line of work. The dogs on this farm include breeds of all kinds, such as cocker spaniels, English spaniels, beagles and Pyrenees as well as the more commonly found on meat farms, like mastiffs and Jindos.
 - The dogs from this farm are being transported by HSI to 17 shelters throughout the US that are part of the Humane Society of the United States [Emergency Placement Partner](#) (EPP) shelter program. Some dogs will also be flown to Canada and the UK.
- To date, HSI has rescued 770 dogs from South Korean dog meat farms and transported them overseas for rehoming.

Why are we bringing the dogs to the United States?

- Past farm closures have shown that there is high demand for dogs rescued from these farms within the U.S. with many shelters finding they have long lines of potential adopters when the dogs are made available.
- Adoption within S. Korea is limited, and small breeds and purebred dogs are most preferred.
- Though many South Koreans oppose the consumption of dogs and the cruelty that exists in the trade, dogs from dog meat farms are still not widely considered to be acceptable as pets.
- The dogs brought to the U.S. are given a second chance that most dogs from the dog meat trade don't get.

Are you helping other dogs in Korea?

- Yes. We consistently meet with other dog meat farmers and discuss opportunities for them to close their doors for good, and transition into other activities.
- HSI is also focusing on a public awareness campaign to highlight the cruelty of the dog meat trade and to close the gap in perception of a "pet dog" vs a "meat dog," while promoting adoption within Korea.

- With the upcoming 2018 Olympics to be held in Pyeongchang, and the distaste of the trade both within and outside of South Korea, it's a good opportunity for international pressure in reducing the dog meat industry in the long term and getting the Korean government on board in assisting farmers to make the transition into alternative, more humane industries.

What are you doing to curb and eliminate the dog meat trade elsewhere in Asia?

- HSI co-founded the Asia Canine Protection Alliance (ACPA) in 2013 to combat the dog meat trade in Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos.
- The campaign has made progress, securing a five year moratorium on the cross border trade of dogs for meat between all countries.
- ACPA is also working with the Vietnam government to increase public awareness about the risks involved in consuming dog meat, and the direct correlation of the trade in dogs for meat and the spread of rabies.
- In China, HSI is partnering with local animal welfare organizations and supporting their efforts in combatting the dog meat trade within their own country.
- Since August 2014, more than 10,000 dogs have been rescued from large transport vehicles carrying hundreds of captured dogs in crowded cages to their deaths at various slaughterhouses in the country.
- HSI has a major campaign targeting the cruel Yulin dog meat festival held annually in June in Yulin, China, when an estimated 10,000 dogs are killed and consumed in a number of days.

Can I adopt any of the dogs from S. Korea? If so, how?

- Expert staff at each EPP shelter will treat, evaluate and determine the dogs for adoption. Please refer to each shelter's website or contact them for more information.
- Some dogs may require more time and training before a successful adoption is possible.

What about the many other dogs in the US awaiting adoption in shelters? Don't the Korean dogs compete with these dogs for good homes?

- The compelling and very sad stories of the Korean dogs help to increase awareness of the good work that local animal shelters do and the help they offer to all homeless dogs and cats in need.
- The Korean dogs' story brings people to the shelters to adopt, but in many cases, people walk away with other dogs from the shelter.
- Overall adoption spikes in these shelters for all dogs awaiting adoption, despite the initial interest in just the specific dogs with a story.

Why is it ok to eat cows and other farm animals, but not dogs?

- HSI addresses the cruelties that occur on factory farms and similar operations. The dog meat issue in Asia is just another among this campaign.
- HSI opposes animal cruelty, and campaigns on behalf of all animals used for food, including pigs, cows, chickens and other creatures. Our dog meat campaign highlights the intense cruelty to dogs abused and made to suffer in this industry, beaten to death, strangled or electrocuted. Their suffering deserves attention, like that of all animals. We encourage those interested in learning more about our work for farm animals to visit hsi.org
- In many of the cultures where dog meat is consumed, there is a growing social divide as the pet industry/dog keeping increases significantly. The once clear divide between a "pet dog" and a "meat dog" is diminishing quickly and our campaign is helping to expedite the end of this cruel

practice.

Why are HSUS and HSI against the eating of dog meat when it's a cultural issue?

- **It is an issue of cruelty first and foremost.** The commercial trade in live dogs for meat is intensely cruel, with animals taken from the streets, hundreds crowded on top of one another in trucks and taken long distances (often days) without food or water to a location for an inhumane slaughter. The same is for the millions of dogs suffering on industrialized dog meat farms awaiting their day of a horrific slaughter.
- We also address the direct correlation between the commercial trade and the spread of rabies, a major public health issue in many of the countries that consume dog meat.
- Currently, in places like the Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand, eating dog is not considered acceptable within their cultures, and more people are sharing that sentiment.

Boknal Days

South Korea's Boknal days are not a festival in the usual sense, but three days known as chobok, jungbok, and malbok at 10 day intervals across July and August, the hottest days of the lunar calendar. Unlike in China, dog meat is still fairly commonly consumed in South Korea, but the 'bok' days are when Koreans eat the most dog meat, particularly dog meat stew or Bosingtang which they believe invigorates the blood.

Humane Society International's campaign focuses on addressing dog meat consumption throughout the whole year, not just the summer months. We want to change people's attitudes toward the perceived difference between "pet dogs" who deserve protection, and "meat dogs" who receive none. We aim to foster compassion for all dogs, a newer concept in South Korea. As well as shifting consumer attitudes, HSI is also working hard to shut down the dog meat trade itself. Unlike other Asian countries, where dogs are stolen or snatched from the street, in South Korea they are bred on dog meat farms in the most appalling conditions. So we've started a unique project to actively assist dog farmers to close their farms, and move over to humane alternatives such as blueberry farming instead. We've already successfully closed down two dog farms near Seoul, rescuing all 80 dogs. Very few people are willing to adopt these animals inside South Korea, so we flew them all to the United States where they are now safely adopted into loving homes, with just a handful still receiving rehabilitation. We plan more such farm shut downs in the future, but ultimately want to see the South Korean government take responsibility for buying out the dog farmers, who for the most part we're finding are keen to get out of what is often considered a dirty, shameful business. As South Korea farms dogs commercially, we have to acknowledge that people's livelihoods are dependent on this cruel industry, and for change to be sustainable we need to assist them in learning economically viable, cruelty-free trades instead.

Government assistance and support for the closure of dog farms is essential to end this trade permanently. For decades, legislative and policy options have been deadlocked and it's still very challenging to get South Korean politicians to even talk about the dog meat issue. But by presenting legislators with a realistic plan for a government phase-out of the industry, especially with the upcoming 2018 Winter Olympics to be held in Pyeongchang, attitudes are beginning to change and we believe we'll make progress.