



Summary of An Animals Asia Investigation Report

Chinese dog meat trade uncovered

June 2015

 **AnimalsAsia**
Until the cruelty ends

Chinese dog meat trade uncovered

Summary In June 2015, Animals Asia released a series of in-depth research reports on China's dog meat industry. It took four years to complete the reports that reveal the fact that there are no large scale meat dog farms in China at all. The reports also answer the questions from the media and animal protection groups: the so called, large quantity of meat dogs, are in fact pet dogs that are stolen or snatched from households, or stray animals that are poisoned from the streets. Our reports also reveal that the consumption of dogs and cats is not popular in China; over 80% of the population in most of the researched areas do not eat such meat. Here is the key content of the four reports:

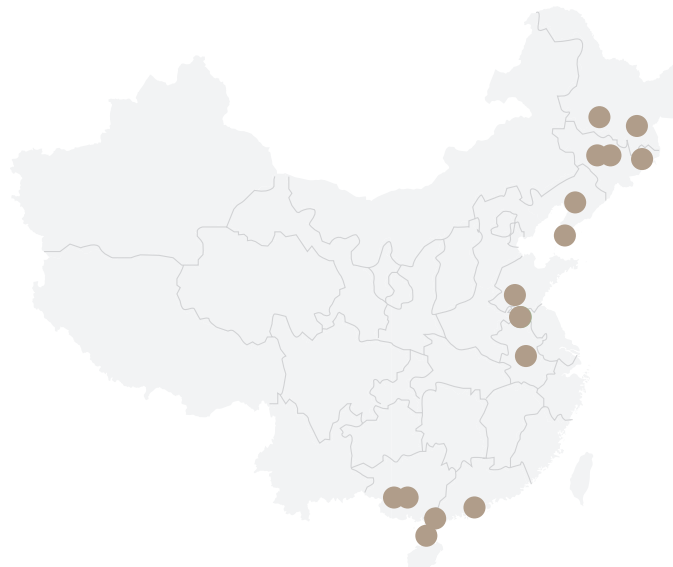
China's meat dog farms are a myth – animals are poisoned and stolen from rural homes

At every stage, - from rearing, to transport, slaughter and point of sale, investigators found a trade riddled with crime and extreme cruelty, violating existing laws on food safety, points to unlawful acts being carried out.



A four-year investigation into the dog meat industry, published in June 2015 by Animals Asia, uncovered no evidence of any large-scale breeding facilities in the country, supporting long-standing claims that the vast majority of so-called “meat dogs” are in fact stolen companion animals and strays.

Our exhaustive investigation covered 15 cities in eight provinces in northeast, southern and central China, where dog eating is most prevalent. The dog farms located and visited were found to be farming dogs on a very small scale nowhere near large enough to supply the country's appetite for dog meat. Media reports estimate up to 10 million dogs are slaughtered annually for meat in China, yet not a single farm visited during our investigation showed evidence of large-scale breeding facilities, where 100-plus dogs were bred and raised.



Animals Asia founder and CEO, Jill Robinson MBE said: “Our investigations strongly point to what everybody familiar with the industry has long suspected – that the vast majority of China’s dog meat comes from stolen companion animals and that misinformation and illegality is rife at every stage of the industry supply chain.”

In Jiaxiang County, Shandong, considered one of the country’s most active dog-raising areas, investigators found scant evidence of industrial-scale dog breeding for consumption. While more than 100 dog farms listed online gave the impression of a thriving industry, in reality many alleged dog farms were actually the same entity with different titles, while none had more than 30 adult dogs on site.

An anonymous worker at Fankuai Dog Meat Products told investigators: “There were large breeding farms, but not any more, they couldn’t carry on. We also had one of our own before, but we found that the bigger it grew, the more diseases the dogs had, plus the costs were very high. The price of raising the dogs is higher than the market price of dog meat.”

Animals Asia Cat and Dog Welfare Director Irene Feng added: “This is why calls for regulating the cat and dog eating industry are completely wrong. The trade cannot be legitimised because it can only ever survive as an industry characterised by criminality and cruelty. Even those who work in the trade know – there is no legitimate future – there’s only the current brutal status quo or the end of cat and dog meat eating altogether. In that respect the end should be inevitable and we say – end it now.”

The report has added yet more weight to the belief that dogs cannot be cost-effectively farmed on a mass scale due to the high cost of a meat-rich diet, their highly territorial nature which makes them inclined to fight in confined groups, and the risk of diseases such as rabies.

In 2014, Xia Zhaofei, head of Clinical Medicine at the China Agricultural University in Beijing said: “Our technology now can realise dog farming, but it entails considerable high technology, and it’s especially difficult, and once something goes wrong, it causes a large number of deaths. Meat from dogs raised on a farm would be expensive at around 100 RMB per jin [1 jin =0.5kg] if everything goes well.” Between 2011 and 2014, the price of dog meat has fluctuated between 6.5 and 23 RMB per 0.5kg.

When questioned, some workers at facilities claiming to be large scale but with few dogs on site argued that they worked under a scattered “household breeding” model, where the central farm supplies puppies for local households to raise. However, no farm could provide any details of the locations of these cooperative breeding households and further investigations in local villages also revealed that villagers had no knowledge of such a system.

In fact, Animals Asia investigations into the attitudes of those raising dogs in rural China revealed that 99.6% of those raising dogs, do so for reasons other than profit. The evidence and testimonies collected suggest that China’s dog meat doesn’t come from industrial scale farms with vaccinations and hygiene standards as required by law, simply because it is not cost-effective.

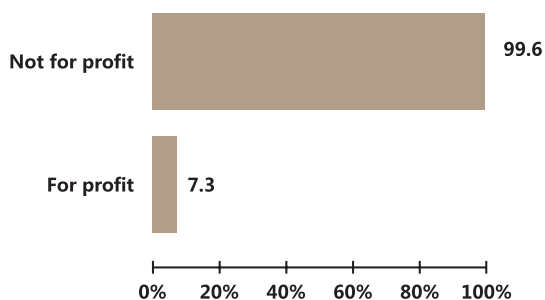


Figure 1: Reasons for keeping dogs (n=1,432, percentage of total number of respondents, multiple-choice question)

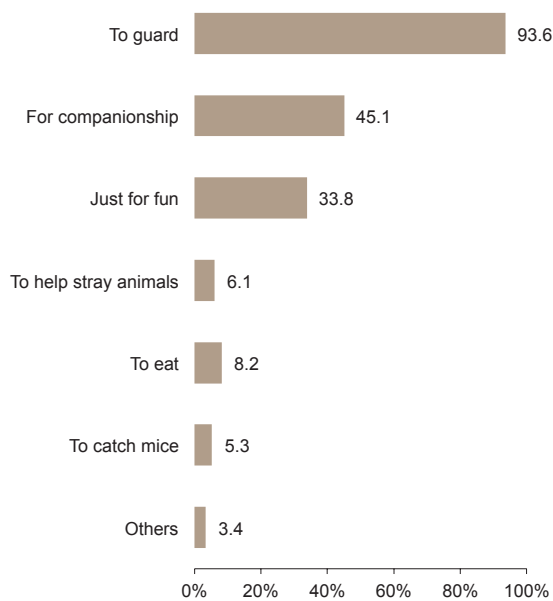


Figure 2: Why dogs are kept (n=1,454, percentage of total number of respondents, multiple-choice question)

The history of the Yulin Dog Meat Festival, that last took place on June 22nd 2015, shows how, once forced to adhere to Chinese law – profits collapse. In 2014, the Yulin authorities enforced food safety laws more stringently at the annual event resulting in an estimated 80% decrease in the number of canines slaughtered for consumption.

The truth is that far more of the animals ending up on China’s dinner plates are actually stolen companion animals and home guardians than was ever previously imagined. And these are supplied by roving gangs of violent dog thieves. The criminal network is vast with few localities escaping the dog thieves’ attention, especially in rural China.

In the spring of 2013, Animals Asia investigated the circumstances of dogs living in rural areas of major Chinese cities and the severe threats they faced. A total of 1,468 responses from 771 villages in 28 provinces, autonomous prefectures and municipalities were collected. An astonishing 70% of villages surveyed claimed to have suffered mysterious dog losses, 75.9% of which were believed to have been stolen to supply the dog meat industry. Further evidence certainly supports the claim with 73.6% of dog disappearances occurring during winter, showing a correlating spike between traditional annual demand for dog meat and companion animal thefts.

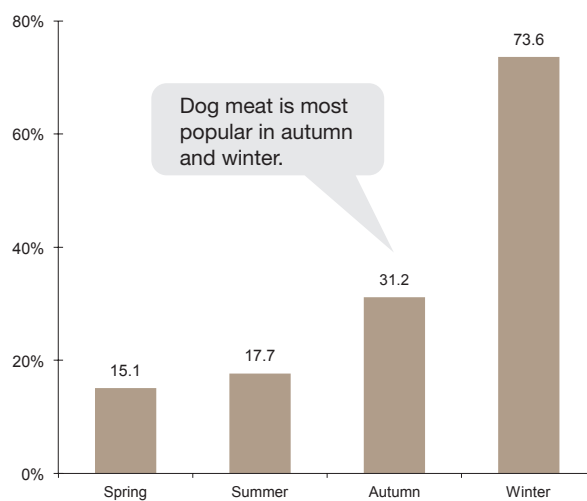
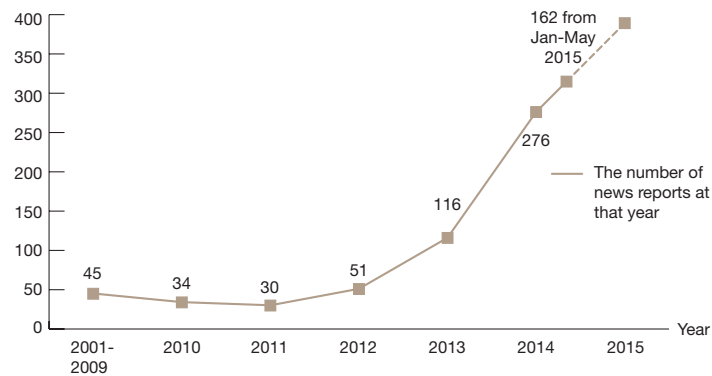


Figure 3: When is dog-loss most common? (n=436, percentage of total number of correspondents, multiple-choice question)

An evaluation of Chinese media reveals the extent of the social disorder being wreaked by dog thieves. More than 710 stories were reported in newspapers across the country between 2001 and 2015, with instances increasing year on year since 2011. The reliance on stolen animals is undoubtedly increasing – meaning more crime is giving more prosperity and power to the criminals. The newspaper cuttings reveal a history of serious animal cruelty being practiced by dog thieves who snatch victims using wire lassos, cyanide tainted bait and crossbows fitted with poison darts.



The violence inflicted upon animals often crosses over to bodily harm on villagers as 3.5% of the villages polled in Animals Asia’s investigation claim to have suffered brutal attacks at the hands of dog thieves during abductions. The risks to human health of an industry relying on stolen dogs are clear when it is considered that around 38% of dogs in rural China receive no vaccinations.

Figure 4: Respondents’ description of brutal attacks

A villager’s ear was cut off when he was trying to stop the thief from taking his dog away.

– Huaibei Lieshan

Someone put a knife to a woman’s throat and told her to give him her dog.

– Huizhou Boluo

Once there was a big fight between villagers and thieves who used wire-cable to grab dogs. Once gangsters armed with knives drove a minibus to collect the stolen dogs

– Zhangzhou Longhai

One thief shouted at the dog owners: “Wanna live or not!?” , then swaggered away; he killed the dogs and stole their chickens.

– Taizhou Taixin

One man drugged dogs with toxic bait. He was exposed during his planned escape by motorcycle and the villagers fought with him.

– Xingyi Xingren

My neighbour’s dog was stolen. He spotted the thief and fought with him, then both of them were sent to hospital.

– Liupanshui Shuichen

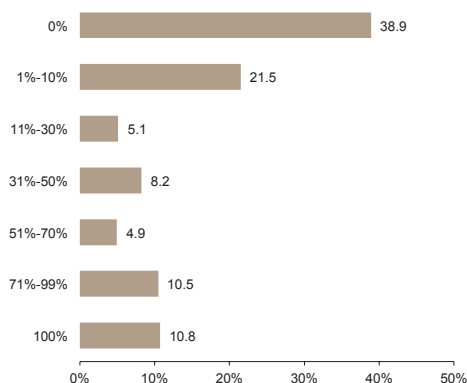


Figure 5: Number of dogs vaccinated (n=1,453, percentage, single-choice question)

Animals Asia's four year investigation into every stage of the dog meat industry supply chain saw investigators visit more than 110 dog meat retailers, 66 restaurants and food stalls, 21 farmers' markets, 12 dog slaughterhouses, eight dog breeding farms, eight dog meat food companies, four dog collection points, and three large live-animal wholesale markets. At every stage, investigators found a trade riddled with crime and extreme cruelty, violating existing laws on food safety. The fact that dogs poisoned with cyanide and other toxic substances are entering the food chain in China should, in itself, be of grave concern.

There are also many violations of the Ministry of Agriculture's rules on quarantine and transportation; there is no quarantine of dogs, no animal breeding records, and no dog transport vehicle that is up to standard to ensure the dogs' basic animal welfare, so long-distance transport and crowded cages mean that many of the dogs fall ill, become injured and even die. As it is difficult to regulate and supervise, trans-regional long-distance transport further increases the risk of rabies transmission to other areas.

In none of the slaughterhouses we visited did we see any animal quarantine or animal quarantine staff. These slaughterhouses, without exception, are filthy- the stench assaults the nostrils, faeces is all over the floor- dogs are in poor health, and the slaughter method is cruel. Many of the dogs in the slaughterhouses were wearing collars. They came in a wide range of breeds, including pedigrees, and these dogs were probably snatched owned dogs.

In the dog meat industry chain, point of sale terminals are large in number and widely distributed throughout various regions, so they are difficult for government departments to supervise and regulate. Because a large number of dogs are from unknown sources and because there is a lack of proper supervision and management in the transportation, slaughter and processing, then whether it is the dog meat sold in restaurants, or killed on- demand dog meat in farmers' markets, or even gift-packaged dog meat available in some malls and supermarkets, the food safety and hygiene will not be effectively guaranteed.



Left: Many of the dogs at market were wearing pet collars.

Middle: At market, dogs are slaughtered on site and the corpses and entrails piled on the floor.

Right: The depilator is filthy, covered with blood and animal hair.

It is also worth mentioning that during our investigation, those involved in the industry were highly secretive and suspicious of outside interest in their work. A legal industry with proper business practices should have no problem with public and media scrutiny. However, the sensitivity and distrust shown in each link of the dog meat industry chain during our investigation – from rearing, to transport, slaughter and point of sale, points to unlawful acts being carried out at every stage.

Chinese dog eating as minority activity with widespread support for ban

An in-depth report into the consumption of cats and dogs in China has revealed the nation is not a country of cat and dog eaters, on the contrary, many areas see up to 80% abstaining.

A side effect of the high profile nature of the industry - due to reports in the western press - is that dogs and cats are often believed to be a Chinese staple.

But Animals Asia's report into habits and attitudes towards the consumption of cats and dogs in the country reveal that eating dog meat is a minority activity.

In cities where eating dogs is less prevalent (B-class cities), only 20% of respondents had eaten dog meat in the past two years. Even in cities with the habit of eating cats and dogs (A class cities), almost half of respondents had not done so recently.

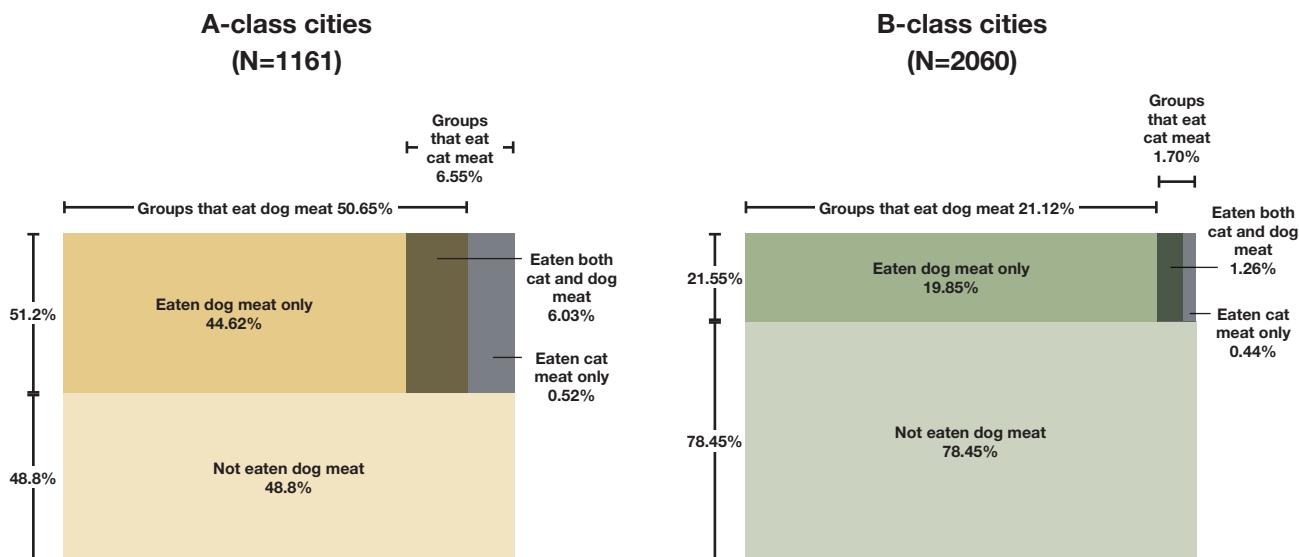


Fig. 6 Proportion of the public that have eaten cat meat or dog meat in the past two years

Note: A-class cities: where dog meat consumption is more common; B-class cities: where dog meat consumption is rare.

Whether in dog meat heartlands or areas where canine consumption is less common, support for banning the slaughter of dogs and cats for consumption was astonishingly high – rising to around two thirds (65.4%) among those who don't eat dog.

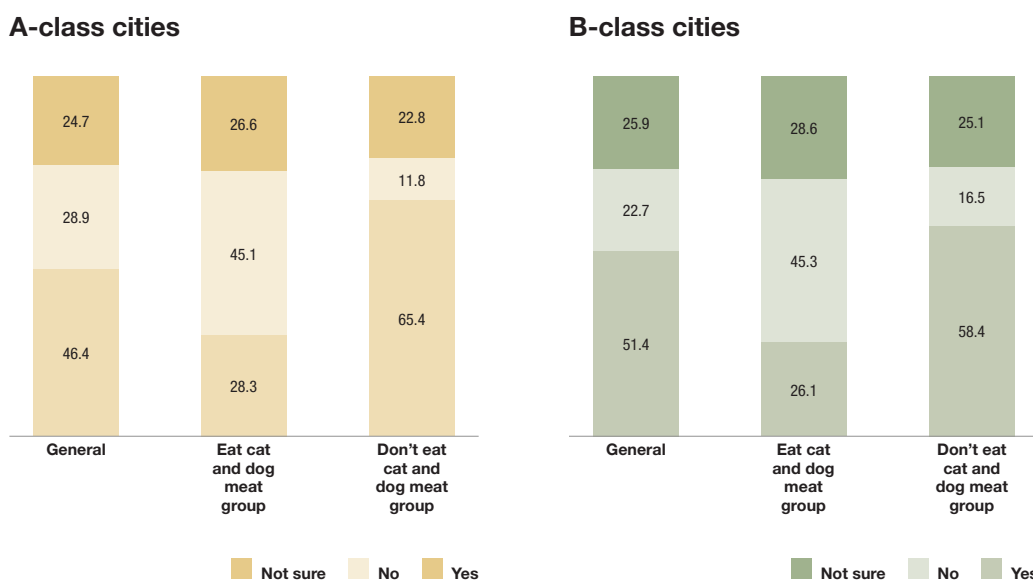


Fig. 7 Should killing cats and dogs for food be illegal? (%)

Animals Asia Cat and Dog Welfare Director Irene Feng said:

“Having worked to help improve the welfare of cats and dogs in China for over a decade, these results support what Animals Asia has been saying for a long time. China is not a nation of dog eaters. This is a

minority practice. To see nearly half of respondents support banning the trade is a real vindication of what we have been saying for many years. It's a reaction to the fact that people are realising that the industry is inherently cruel and that criminality persists at every stage. This industry can't be regulated – that experiment has been tried and is clearly failing. The only solution to the violence, criminality, cruelty and public health risks perpetrated by the dog and cat meat industries is to make it illegal once and for all."

The statistics are published today as part of a far-reaching report commissioned by Animals Asia into attitudes towards the consumption of dogs and cats. More than 3,000 people aged 18-65 were polled from 19 cities around the country.

Animals Asia's report reveals that even among those who do consider dogs and cats to be food, the majority only partook once or twice a year – most likely during special occasions.



*Fig. 8 Frequency of eating dog meat (%)
A-class cities N=534,
B-class cities N=490*

Those who say no to dog meat cite the inherent cruelty of the industry, their believe that cats and dogs are friends not food and poor sanitation as the main reasons.

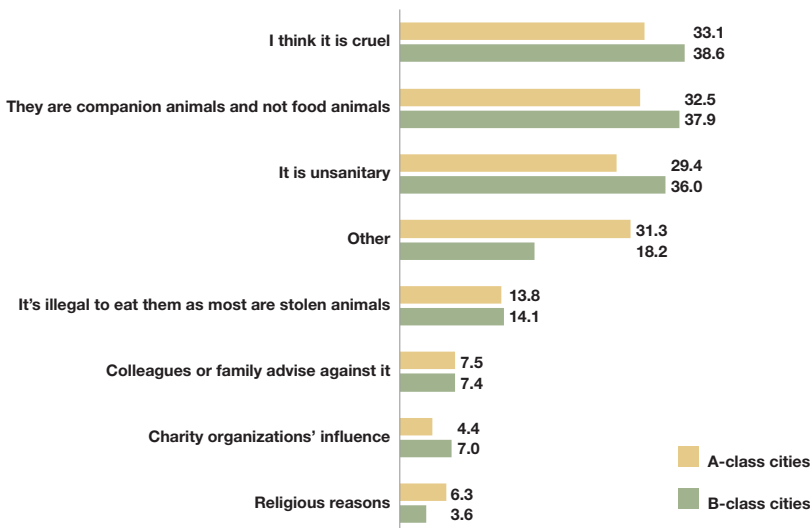


Fig. 9 Reasons for stopping cat and dog eating

Despite the fierce debate surrounding the slaughter of dogs for human consumption, polls revealed that attitudes among those who do and do not partake to be broadly similar.

Both camps overwhelmingly agree that abuse and torture of dogs destined for the dinner plate is unacceptable and that the law must protect all cats and dogs, whether domestic companions, or reared for consumption.

However, strong disagreement was seen on the issue of cat and dog eating being part of China’s gastronomic cultural heritage.

	Percentage who agree with statements	Do not eat cats and dogs	Eat cats and dogs
Similar attitude, mostly agree	Both companion dogs and cats and “meat” dogs and cats should be protected by law.	Over 90%	Around 80%
	It is unacceptable to eat dogs and cats if they are abused or tortured during feeding and slaughtering.	Around 80%	Over 70%
	Dogs and cats are companion animals and cannot morally be eaten.	Around 90%	Over 60%
	Chinese people are increasingly opposed to cat and dog eating.	Over 80%	Over 60%
	Eating cat and dog meat is different from eating pork, beef and mutton.	Over 70%	Over 70%
Some dispute	Cats and dogs kept as pets are different from those that are eaten.	Over 50%	Over 60%
Big dispute, opposite attitude	There is nothing wrong with eating cat or dog meat.	Over 20%	Over 60%
	Eating cat and dog meat is a part of Chinese food culture.	Over 20%	Nearly 60%

With criminality exposed throughout China’s dog meat industry, the public are becoming increasingly worried about a trade serving the few, but harming the many.

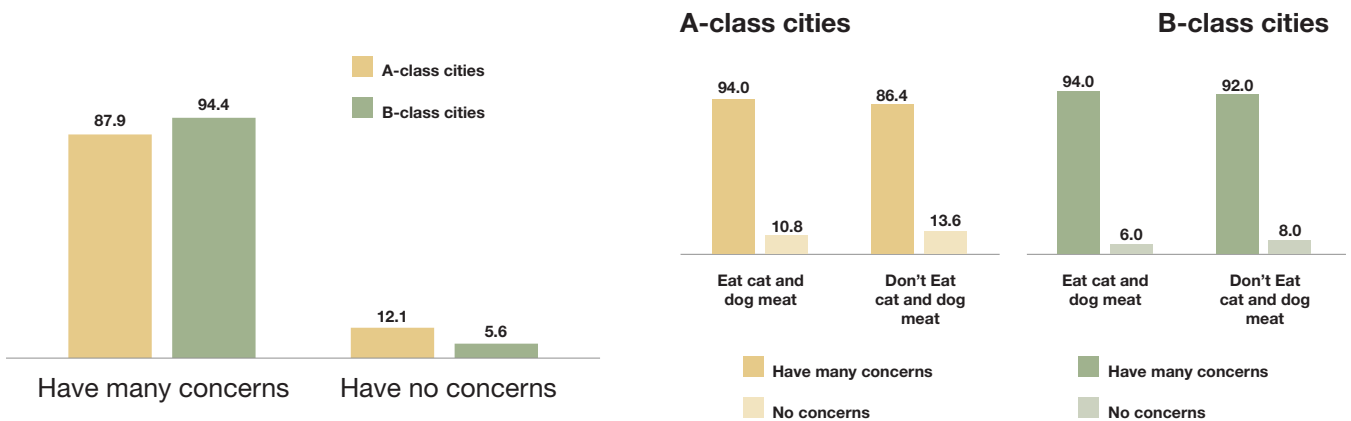


Fig. 10 How concern about cat and dog eating is influencing behavior (%)

Opposition to the industry has reached fever pitch in recent years, with stories of illegality and violence regularly making headlines in local papers.

Animals Asia founder and CEO, Jill Robinsom MBE said:

“The evidence against the industry is becoming overwhelming and now the weight of public opinion can be added to the long list of factors aligned against this cruel trade that is rife with crime. This is the occasional habit of a minority – yet the whole country suffers from the crime and health risks. It certainly looks as though China is getting increasingly closer to saying ‘enough’ and ending the cruelty on its doorstep.”

If China did decide to end the trade, it would become the latest in a string of Asian countries to take cats and dogs off the menu, the most recent being Thailand in 2014.

Recommendation:

The dog meat industry is filled with illegality, and strengthening supervision over it will reduce crime and ensure food safety. Animals Asia strongly recommends:

1. China implements animal protection laws and bans the sale, transportation and slaughter of dogs for their meat as soon as possible.

Note: Many governments in Asia have recognised that more and more people are against eating dogs, and are making efforts to ban their slaughter and consumption. In Hong Kong, slaughtering dogs for food has been unlawful since 1950. The Philippines made the slaughter of dogs for food illegal in 1998, and Taiwan outlawed the consumption of dog meat in 2003 and Thailand in 2014. These countries have realised that dogs are an important part of an advanced, civilized society, and have ordered a ban on their consumption, winning widespread praise in the international community.

2. The government strengthens its supervision and law enforcement in each link of the industry chain, including stronger penalties for stealing and poisoning dogs, banning the existing illegal slaughter and trade of dogs, and intensified supervision over illicit trafficking of dogs.
3. The public recognise that by consuming dogs they are encouraging theft and other crimes and also risking their own health. We are expecting more publicity and education can be provided to the public and improve civil competence on animal welfare.