Fighting to Protect Dogs and Cats in China

The problem:

Owning a pet has only become popular in China in the past two decades and consequently, how to look after a pet responsibly is not widely known. Low awareness about the need for sterilization and vaccination results in pet overpopulation and rabies outbreaks. The situation is particularly serious in rural communities where dogs often go unleashed and rabies post-exposure treatment is often unavailable.

As a way to control rabies and pet populations, municipalities set up regulations to restrict pet ownership such as limiting the number and the size of dogs people can own. China does not have legislation to prevent cruelty to animals. Sometimes, local authorities enforce regulations by organizing dog-killing squads that roam the streets beating dogs to death with clubs. It is a slow and extremely distressing way for an animal to die and dogs are sometimes killed right in front of their owners.

It’s been reported that more than 2 million cats and dogs are killed each year for their meat. Many of them are previously owned animals and stolen from communities. On the way to restaurants, the animals are transported in deplorable conditions; with animals jammed into small cages without food and water and unable to move for days on end. Since dogs and cats are not considered farm animals, no quarantine standard is applied, so there is the danger that infectious diseases will spread to animals and people.

Our solution:

While supporting local animal rescue groups in animal rescue and rehoming, we lobby the government to introduce humane legislation to protect cats and dogs. On a local level, we are convincing cities and towns to enact regulations that mandate vaccination to prevent rabies and sterilization to control pet population. On a national level, we help draft welfare legislation that puts an end to animal cruelty such as dog culls and the illegal meat trade.

At the urging of IFAW and concerned Chinese citizens, the government has tightened the health and quarantine regulations to prevent the unsafe and inhumane inter-province transport of dogs and cats for human consumption.

We work with local rescue groups, veterinary associations and government agencies to educate people in responsible pet ownership, ensuring that pets are treated with respect and dignity and that dogs receive the behavioral training they need.

To help rural pet owners who do not have access to adequate facilities or information on how best to care for their beloved animals, we initiated a spay and neuter program in suburban Beijing. Bringing education, vaccination and sterilization to rural communities, we raise awareness about responsible pet ownership, increase vaccination rate, control pet population in a humane way and enhance the animal welfare standards in veterinary medicine.

How You Can Help:

Get Involved ▶ Persuade everyone you know who has a pet to have it spayed or neutered.

Adopt an animal from a shelter rather than buying one from a pet shop or breeder.

Donate ▶ Your gift could help our mobile clinics carry on delivering vet care to dogs and cats who need it or to help pass animal welfare legislation in China that would protect all animals from cruelty. To donate go to www.ifaw.org/donate or call us at 1-800-932-4329.

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