



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES



HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL

TO: Council of Agriculture, Executive Yuan, Taiwan
RE: October 7 Consultative Meeting on Buddhist Animal Release Ritual
FROM: Humane Society International

Statement from Humane Society International regarding Buddhist animal release ritual

Humane Society International (HSI) is the international arm of The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the largest animal protection organization in the United States with more than 11 million members and constituents. For nearly 20 years, HSI has been fighting for the protection of all animals through advocacy, education and hands-on programs. Thank you for holding the October 7 consultative meeting regarding the Buddhist animal release ritual (mercy release).

Since 2009, HSI has worked closely with Environment and Animal Society Taiwan (EAST) to address the problems of animal suffering and environmental damage caused by mercy release. HSI and EAST held press conferences and issued reports on the issue in the past, raising public awareness and urging the government to implement stricter regulations on such unauthorized animal releases.

HSI is particularly concerned about the massive scale of mercy release rituals in Taiwan that, according to a study by EAST, impact at least 200 million animals a year. We are also alarmed by the news that some Taiwanese Buddhist groups regularly take their congregation members to China and other Asian countries to practice the ritual, thus escalating the problem beyond your borders and adding to the level of harm to the environment and animals of these affected areas. Taiwan's regulations and approach, which will be discussed in the October 7 meeting, can help other governments in the region combat similar problems.

In the United States, HSI regularly reaches out to the Buddhist community and urges them to adopt alternatives that are truly compassionate and help the animals. For instance, in early September this year, HSI took a group of Buddhist leaders and congregation members in New York City to a nearby animal sanctuary. While touring the sanctuary, the Buddhist visitors performed a blessing for the animals and made generous donations to the sanctuary. You can learn more about this initiative in our web story at <http://bit.ly/ny-visit>

We applaud your efforts in addressing this issue by holding the October 7 consultative meeting. If there is anything Humane Society International can do to help, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best regards,

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