



# HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

April 27, 2020

Li Zhanshu  
Chairman of the National People's Congress  
Beijing, China

Dear Chairman Li:

We are writing to you on behalf of our 11 million supporters around the world, to applaud the decision to ban dog and cat meat consumption in the cities of Shenzhen and Zhuhai. And, we warmly welcome the Ministry of Agriculture's public declaration that dogs are exempt from the livestock white list (National Catalogue of Livestock and Poultry Genetic Resources) due to their special status as companion animals in China and around the world.

These initiatives come at a time when countries across the globe are united in a collective response to the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, including revising food safety regulations. Within that context, it is only sensible and responsible for authorities to turn to trades such as dog and cat meat that, while not connected to COVID-19, pose their own significant human health risk, such as the spread of trichinellosis, cholera and rabies.

The dog and cat meat consumption bans in Shenzhen and Zhuhai have been hailed around the world as progressive animal welfare legislation, as well as prohibitions that seek to safeguard the health and safety of Chinese consumers. We believe it would be a great step forward if the National People's Congress under your leadership could legislate a permanent ban on dog and cat meat trade and consumption.

Rabies kills tens of thousands of people across Asia annually, and has been found in dogs traded for human consumption in China, Vietnam and Indonesia. Not only is there a risk in handling the dogs, and in the extremely unsanitary slaughter and butchery process, but there is also some reason for concern surrounding consumption itself, with the World Health Organisation warning that eating dog meat increases the risk of contracting cholera. In addition to serious animal welfare issues posed by this exceptionally brutal trade, the mass movement of large numbers of dogs of unknown disease status across China's provincial borders not only breaches the country's food safety regulations, but facilitates the spread of rabies and undermines China's efforts in controlling this disease, including its commendable aspirations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and deliver the objectives under the 'Healthy China' strategy.

In addition, the trade in dogs and cats for meat is largely fueled by criminal activity, as a large proportion of the animals are stolen pets, the very pets that the Ministry of Agriculture just acknowledged hold a special status for the people of China.

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Worldwide

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With an estimated 10 million dogs and four millions cats killed for human consumption every year across China, and in light of the serious public health threat that this trade poses, and the responsibility of regional and national governments around the world to do everything in their power to mitigate sources of disease outbreaks, we believe it is in China's best interest to urgently introduce a legislative ban on the trade in and consumption of dogs and cats. The introduction now of such a law would help demonstrate to the world that cities across China prioritize the health and safety of their citizens, as well as the protection of companion animals.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "j. flocken" with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeffrey Flocken  
President  
Humane Society International