

# Public Opinion Polls and Data Research – *ascertaining trends in South Korea’s dog meat industry and pet culture*



HUMANE SOCIETY  
INTERNATIONAL

## Key Findings

### DOG MEAT & GAESOJU CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR TRENDS

- The rate of respondents who have consumed dog meat is decreasing steadily
  - Compared to 2017, the rate of respondents who have consumed dog meat decreased by 5.9% in 2020 (64.8% vs. 58.9%)
  - 83.8% of respondents answered that that they haven’t consumed dog meat or they are not willing to consume it in the future.
- The consumption of dog meat is concentrated during the summer (*bok nal*), especially Chobok (1<sup>st</sup> bok day, July)
  - 72.9% of consumers said their dog meat consumption is seasonal (vs. 57% in 2017), 95.9% of which do so in summer.

### PERCEPTION & ATTITUDE TOWARD DOG MEAT CONSUMPTION

- The rate of respondents who support banning dog meat increased by 23.9% from 34.7% in 2017 to 58.6% in 2020
- The rate of respondents who are opposed to banning dog meat decreased by 23.9 % from 65.3% in 2017 to 41.4 % in 2020
- There is a significant decrease from 2017 to 2020 by 21.1% of people who believed dogs could be eaten just like other livestock (51.9% to 30.8%); and by 11.2% of people who believe there is a difference between “meat dogs” and “pet dogs” (44.4% to 33.2%).
- The perception that dog meat culture is not associated with modern Korean culture has significantly increased compared to 2017, from 29.2% to 47.7%
- The perception that dog meat consumption reflects poorly on Korea has increased from 36.7% (2017) to 57% (2020)

- The attitude of caring for dogs has increased steadily from 58.7% to 66% of respondents believing that all dogs deserve care and protection

## **IMPACT OF HSI SUMMER CAMPAIGN**

- Comparison of attitudes towards banning dog meat between opinion poll 1 (pre-summer campaign) and opinion poll 2 (post summer campaign) suggest that HSI's summer campaign affected people's attitudes and perception of banning dog meat consumption and dog adoption, with those who aware the campaign showing:
  - a higher agreement to banning dog meat (62.5% vs. 53.9%) and supporting pet dog adoption (42.6% vs. 34.4%).
  - greater concern about the dog welfare and protection (70.4% vs. 60.7%)
  - greater concern that dog eating reflects poorly on South Korea (61.4% vs. 51.8%)
  - greater concern about the welfare of dogs raised for meat (69.3% vs. 64.7%)
  - more support for the statement that eating dog meat is an outdated practice, and should not be a part of modern Korea (51.5% vs. 43.2%)
  - Increased awareness that all sizes and breeds of dogs are raised and slaughtered for meat on dog meat farms

## **PET OWNERSHIP**

- 63% of respondents have or have had a pet in the past
- Sourcing pets varies between age groups, but the order of sourcing is consistent (from highest to lowest):
  - "For free" (from family/ friend/ etc.): 71.4%
  - Purchasing from a pet shop or online, family member, friend, etc.: 22.5%
  - Adoption from a rescue center, animal protection organization, etc.: 13%

## **Desk-based research**

### **Data on dog meat restaurants**

- Estimated total number of dog meat-selling restaurants is 3,388
- Highest prevalence in Gyeonggi / Incheon (1,616/ 37.8%) and Gyeongsang / Busan/ Daegu / Ulsan (850/ 19.9%)
- 436 (10%) dog meat-selling restaurants in Seoul
- 97% of dog meat-selling restaurants sell dog meat all year round; 3% sell dog meat only during the summer months

### Number of markets selling dog meat/ live dogs for meat nationwide

- The traditional markets that used to sell dog meat and live dogs are being closed down by local authorities.
- *Chilseong market* (Daegu) is believed to be the last remaining dog meat-selling market in Korea.
- However, there are still 2,861 registered dog farms, and there is no accurate data available for hidden/ unregistered dog farms

Poll research conducted June – September 2020, commissioned by Humane Society International, conducted by [Nielsen](#).