



Sahabat Alam Malaysia
Friends of the Earth Malaysia
For Environmental Justice

1, Jalan Joki, 11400 Penang, Malaysia
Tel No: +604 827 6930
Fax No: +604 827 6932
Email: foemalaysia@gmail.com
<https://www.foe-malaysia.org>

Letter to Editor

3 May 2019

The 'Ugly Truth' behind the dog and cat meat trade

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) is disheartened to learn that the culture of eating dogs and cats has caught on in Malaysia with Vietnamese nationals selling dog and cat meat in Selangor and Johor Bahru. The trend has even caught up with a group of Indonesian men in Shah Alam killing a stray dog with a parang after which they then cooked his meat to eat.

The publication of video footage of workers from a steel manufacturing company torturing and killing a dog was grotesque. The company has since apologised following criticisms from social media users. Although the company affirmed action taken on the incident would be posted on its Facebook page, SAM has yet to receive any word from them in writing.

It is sad to know that our current Animal Welfare Act 2015 (Act 772) does not prohibit killing of animals including dogs and cats for the purpose of human consumption. However, the eating of dog and cat meat must never be excused as a cultural prerogative. Slicing limbs off living animals and slaughtering them in a manner that is nightmarish in its brutality is not culture—it is barbarism—and that is the crux of the issue. Culture and tradition can be used to excuse all manner of dreadful acts against people as well as animals, but truly it is often used as a smokescreen for behaviour that is cruel and inhumane.

The dog and cat meat trade is animal abuse on a massive scale and intolerably cruel. There is no explicit recognition of dog and cat meat as legitimate food, or of dogs and cats as animals fit for human consumption, nor is there a clear ban on the sale or slaughter of these animals.

The method and manner in which an animal is killed under such circumstances would be subject to the provisions of the animal welfare legislation. If such killing caused the animal unnecessary pain or caused the animal not to die instantly, it would likely constitute an offence under the general cruelty provisions of such legislation.

Attention must be paid to the criminal theft of owned pets. Those trading dog and cat meat prefer companion animals because they are easier to handle than feral dogs and cats. This could be the answer to the number of missing or lost pets—they are ending up as food.

SAM would like to question the legality of eating the meat. Which authorities are responsible for granting permits to these foreigners to start the dog and cat meat sales here? Is there any certification from the health department to verify that these meats are safe for consumption? Which government agency will be held accountable should there be an outbreak of disease from virus contamination of these meats? The government does not regulate dogs and cats the way it does other livestock, so the meats of these animals does not fall under the food hygiene or meat sanitation laws and is not subject to controls at the source, nor is it tested before human consumption.

SAM believes the consumption of dog and cat meat should be expressly prohibited in statute. Dogs and cats hold a specific place in Malaysian society as companion animals and eating their meat is offensive to Malaysian cultural values. Due to the many animal welfare and public health concerns, SAM strongly discourages the consumption of and trade in dog and cat meat. Instead, SAM encourages rigorous enforcement of existing laws and supports new controls and regulations where current legislation does not exist aimed at banning what is typically an inhumane and vile practice against the perpetrators of this trade.

S M Mohamed Idris
President
Sahabat Alam Malaysia