

Korean President Lee Myung-bak
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Dear Mr. President

Congratulations on becoming the new president of Korea. As people all around the world have been paying close attention to your political and economic reforms, we have heard about a proposal that goes against your aims to take Korea forward in the international arena. On March 24th this year, the Municipality of Seoul released the *Dog Meat Hygiene Management Policy*, a document that lists dogs as livestock. It plans to recommend amendments of the national law on Livestock Products Processing to incorporate this listing.

Korea's hi-tech and electronic products are sold throughout the world, and the so-called "Korean Wave", which includes the entertainment, food and tourism industries, has also greatly increased the interest of people all across Asia in Korea. If dogs are listed as livestock for human consumption under the Korean national legislation, this would make Korea the first country in the world to legalise dog meat, and would also make you the first national leader in the world to permit dogs to be used 'as food for human consumption'. We are afraid that such a decision would not only be a step backward in the development of civilisation, but would also damage you and your country's international image and reputation, with a direct economic impact on Korean products and services.

Dogs are simply dogs, and they should not be divided into pet dogs and edible dogs. Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Thailand have all already legally banned the consumption of dog meat. Although there are still a few countries and people in Asia who consume dog meat, their living standards are, on average, far lower than those of Korea, and until now there has never been a country which has, through national law, legalised the act of eating dog meat!

In the last 20 or 30 years, anthrozoology has gradually brought about a consensus: companion animals bring psychological and physical benefits to humans. They can give humans intimacy and support, alleviate the negative health impacts of stress, and also provide protection against some illnesses. Modern day criminal sociology is also drawing the conclusion that there is a high degree of correlation between cruelty to animals and domestic violence and child abuse. Once dogs become animals that can be freely butchered for human consumption, there will likely be negative social and educational impacts on the psychology of the Korean public.

In order to create a more humane society, and for the sake of the development of human civilisation, we, as co-citizens of this planet, with all sincerity urge your government to prevent the legalisation of dog eating in your national laws and to prohibit the consumption of dog meat as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Signature:

Country:

E-mail: