

SHANGHAI'S ONE-DOG LAW NOW IN EFFECT

On May 15, Shanghai's one-dog law came into effect. The law limits dog ownership to one dog per household in an effort to curb the growing popularity of dogs in China's largest city. Under the law, anyone currently owning two or more licensed dogs will be allowed to keep them. However dog owners who allow their dogs to breed must give up their puppies to no-dog households or government-approved adoption agencies before the puppies reach three months.

Dog ownership has grown alongside China's fast-expanding middle class with official estimates putting Shanghai's pet dog population at 800,000 - although only a quarter of that number are registered, according to a report from the China Daily.

The government had said tighter regulation was needed due to nuisance barking, waste, and the growing risk of dog attacks which affect the city's environment and sanitation.

There were about 58 million pet dogs in 20 major Chinese cities at the end of 2009 and the figure is rising about 30 percent each year, according to a survey by Beijing-based magazine Dog Fans.

CHINESE RIGHTS ACTIVISTS SAVE OVER 500 DOGS FROM THE BUTCHER'S BLOCK

In a rare show of public activism in China, over 200 people responded to a call on a microblogging site to help save over 500 dogs from being transported to a slaughterhouse. As reported in the Associated Press, a truck packed with dogs was blockaded at a toll both for fifteen hours while the dogs' release was negotiated.

The rescue was a rare successful case of social activism in China. Several reports have said that the dogs were suffering from dehydration, various

injuries and many showed signs of parvovirus. China has no animal protection laws for 'domestic' animals—only for wild animals. The truck's driver has reportedly said that he transported the dogs just the same as he would pigs, cows and sheep.

PIAA PUBLICLY LABELS THE RSPCA ACTIVISTS

The PIAA (Pet Industry Association of Australia) recently issued a press release that labelled the RSPCA Radical Activists. The email-out was titled "Update on Puppy Farm Issues" and stated *The puppy farm issue affects every participant in the pet industry whether you are in retail, grooming, boarding or related services.*

The wild claims made by some animal activist groups might be wrong, or might be motivated by an ideological desire to shut down pet retailing, but they do hurt the image of our industry.

The statement goes on to say, *The RSPCA will argue that their campaign is aimed at cruel puppy factories, and they do not necessarily have a problem with PIAA pet retailers. But when the RSPCA endorses posters with headlines stating "puppy factories are the suppliers of the cute puppy that you see in the pet shop window" it is hard not to believe elements in the RSPCA are joining the radicals who want to shut down our industry.*

The statement from PIAA's Chief Executive, Roger Perkins also states that *Breeders, through newspaper, internet and word of mouth sales, are responsible for 85% of sales, about 382,500 dogs.*

What PIAA don't differentiate in this statement is the difference between registered, ethical breeders and those that are making a quick buck by producing litters in dodgy conditions and poor breeding practices.

The Puppy Farm debate will continue to rage on between Rescue groups and people who stand to profit from the breeding and sale of puppies. And we realize that both sides manipulate data, facts and figures through both passion and paranoia. But in an ideal world, wouldn't it be to everyone's benefit to work together to create awareness so that the public can make an educated choice as to where they get their companion animal from? It's a contentious and hotly debated issue that continues to nip at the heels of everyone involved.

IMPOSTER ASSISTANCE DOGS ON THE INCREASE

Phony ID cards, counterfeit vests and fake certificates are now being used to pass dogs off as service dogs. As reported in the LA Times, some dog owners are stooping to an all time low to pass their dogs off as service dogs so they access public places such as restaurants, malls and unsecured travel on planes.

Various items such as vests can be purchased online for as little as US\$20 up to \$300 and no training is required. What's particularly disturbing about the increase in fake service dogs is that it makes it difficult for people with legitimate dogs access to public places. A 'fake' or untrained dog may misbehave or not cope in a public place. If a dog misbehaves in a restaurant, then the restaurant owner may not allow a legitimate service dog access to their premises in the future.

Guide dogs that assist the blind or sight impaired are the most visible of service dogs, however there are many other legitimate service dogs such as those that can predict seizures, assist the physically disabled or hearing impaired. It is feared that the selfish actions of a few could greatly impact the good work and training of many others.

PLANS TO HAVE PETS TRAVEL ON VICTORIAN REGIONAL TRAINS GOES OFF THE RAILS

Victoria's Transport Minister, Terry Mulder announced in mid April that pets are allowed back on board Victoria's regional rail operator V/Line. However V/Line held a different view and quickly had this announcement on their website, The State Government announced on Wednesday 20 April that pets will be allowed to travel on V/Line trains under certain conditions.

The implementation of this policy will require staff and union consultation to determine procedures and practices which will ensure that these animals can be carried in a way which is safe for staff and passengers.

We estimate that this process will take a couple of weeks to complete, and until that time, unfortunately, the current prohibition on pets will have to be maintained.

So it's not all bad news for people wanting to travel by train to regional destinations with their pets. It's just going to take some time for the state government, staff and union officials to work it out.

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