

EUROPEAN FACT SHEET

the global trade in dog and cat fur

Since 1997 The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) has investigated and documented the international trade in dog and cat fur.

This undercover investigation has spanned the globe from source countries in China, the Philippines, and Thailand to retailers and wholesalers in the United States, Germany, Italy, France and - most recently - Denmark.

Background

- Over two million dogs and cats are slaughtered each year for their fur, mostly in China and other Asian countries.
- Investigators documented 50,000 to 100,000 cat pelts stockpiled at animal by-product factories in China.
- At least ten dogs are slaughtered to make a single coat - more if puppies are used. Up to 24 cats are slaughtered to make one cat fur coat.
- Dog and cat fur is used in trims, linings, hats, decorative figurines and folk remedies. Skins are used in dog chew toys and shoe leather.
- The slaughter of these animals is violent and pitiless. Cats are strangled inside their cages as other cats look on. Dogs are noosed about the neck by metal wires, then slashed across the groin. The wire noose cuts into their throats as they struggle in pain before finally losing consciousness. In Harbin, China HSUS investigators documented a German shepherd still blinking and conscious as he was being skinned. At a dog farm several hours north of Harbin investigators documented dead dogs hanging from hooks as others, still alive, awaited their fate inside the same cold and dismal room.
- Dog and cat fur is often falsely labeled to obscure the true source of the fur. Dog fur products have been sold as *gae-wolf*, *goupee*, *Asian wolf*, *China wolf*, *Mongolia dog fur*, *Sobaki*, *Pommern wolf*, *dogue de Chine*, and *loup d'Asie*. Cat fur has sold as *rabbit*, *maopee*, *goyangi*, *katzenfelle*, *natuerliches mittel*, *chat de Chine*, and *gatto cinesi*. In fact, fur manufacturers in China told HSUS investigators they would sew any label they asked for onto dog and cat fur products to make them more marketable. Suggestions included *Asiatic raccoon* and *Corsac fox* for dog fur and *wild cat* for domestic cat.

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The European Connection

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Denmark

Copenhagen, May 2001 - HSUS investigators, alerted by the Danish group *Anima*, documented the sale of domestic dog and cat fur at a retail store. The store openly sells dog and cat fur imported from China.

France

Garenne-Colombes (Hauts-de-Seine), Mar. 2000 - A stash of cat skins was discovered in a warehouse. Acting on the basis of an anonymous tip, Nanterre police found the cat skins buried under a pile of assorted other animal skins. (Agence France-Presse Newswires, March 8, 2000)

Deux-Sevres, 1997 - The *Directions des Services Vétérinaires* discovered 1,500 cat skins held by a merchant intending to export them for the manufacture of toys. (Agence France-Presse Newswires, March 8, 2000)

Germany

<http://www.zweitehand.de> - As recently as May 5 and May 21, 2001 this German web site advertised *Gaewolfmantel* (dog) coats. Numerous dog and cat fur coats have been advertised for sale on this site since 1997, when HSUS researchers first began monitoring it.

Berlin, Dec. 1999 - HSUS investigators videotaped *gae-wolf* coats available for sale in two fur stores. Investigators purchased one *gae-wolf* coat with an invoice labeling it as such.

Leipzig, Apr. 1997 - Investigators documented 10,000 Korean *gae-wolf* pelts offered at a major auction house. Monitored by HSUS researchers from 1997-98, this auction house listed regular offerings of *gae-wolf* pelts.

Billigheim, 1995 - An auction list from a German furrier offered *G. Wolf felle* (dog) and *Hauskatzen* (cat).

Italy

May 6, 2001 - According to *Liga Anti Vivisezione*, RAI 1 television broadcast an interview with a leather goods importer who admitted to having imported dog skins. During the interview he apparently stated that Italy currently imports 50,000 to 100,000 dog skins annually from China.

1996 - A shipment of 4.7 tons of dog hides intended for export to Italy was intercepted by authorities in Hong Kong. The dog hides originated in Henan, China and were seized for not bearing proper permits. Under a local law all products of rabies-prone animals require authorization from the Hong Kong Agriculture and Fisheries Department before entry into Hong Kong. (Agence France-Presse Newswires in English, Jan. 7, 1997)

Treviso, 1990s - A boot company imported dog fur from China as a lining for ski boots. A U.S. subsidiary of this company sold boots labeled, "trim: Chinese dog fur," before being enjoined from further imports of these boots in 1994. (Atlanta Constitution, Feb. 1, 1992; Footwear News, Aug. 15, 1994)

Spain

Barcelona, 2000 - A garment purchased in a store along the well-known Ramblas was identified through forensic analysis as domestic cat fur.