



**KINSHIP CIRCLE**

# ONE COUNTRY'S COMPANION IS ANOTHER'S CUISINE

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By Brenda Shoss

Red rivulets flow past a cage where he huddles in airless heat. Hands abruptly tug him through metal slats. They bash his head with a pipe and shove an electric prod against him. He is a carcass, but awake, dunked in boiling water and blow-torched. Finally, everything goes black.

Elsewhere, an animal stiffens under the stomp of muddy boots. Hands drag him down a corridor and flip him over a four-foot ledge. A chain is looped around his neck and clipped to a forklift. Suddenly the ground goes away. Up, up, up. His legs fumble for an absent bottom. He panics beneath the rigid clamp at his neck. After four, five or more minutes, he is dead.

Their fear and pain are equal. But the first is a dog, the second a pig — and herein lies our cultural divide. Empathy for the dog rarely extends to the pig.

The dog's death — in a meat market in China, Korea, Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia or Thailand — triggers rage. But the hanging of the pig, an arguably cute, tame animal, doesn't elicit our fury.

Western societies sympathize with the "pets" they see and cuddle. Conversely, "livestock" is an abstract concept drawn from occasional petting zoos, childhood films, or plastic-wrapped body parts.

Pigs, like dogs, are outgoing individuals who form social ties and navigate life through curious snouts. Each year in the U.S., about 100 million pigs are denied space, sunlight, straw bedding, mudbaths or any feature fundamental to pigs. At hog factories, 600-pound sows are immobilized in 2-foot wide gestation crates and forcibly impregnated. Pigs are tail-docked,



castrated and teeth-clipped without anesthesia. They travel to Midwest slaughterhouses "in windchills as low as 70 degrees below zero. Many hogs become frozen solid and have to be ripped with chains from truck walls," says Humane Farming Association, a U.S. group that exposes factory-farming abuse.

On the kill floor, an "insufficiently stunned pig may be alert during dismemberment," observes Temple Grandin in *Survey of Stunning and Handling in Federally Inspected Beef, Veal, Pork and Sheep Slaughter Plants*. Pigs kick and squeal as workers "stick" them with knives... Humans compartmentalize animals based on their "function." Thus, a companion in one country may be cuisine in another.

## **DOGS FOR DINNER & CATS AS MEDICINE**

Westerners find the consumption of humankind's best friend repugnant. Yet in South Korea some two million dogs are annually killed for human meals.

Humane Society International estimates 500,000 dogs are butchered in the Philippines each year.

In 2007, Koreans acknowledged global opposition to dog meat with rules to ban dog-eating. Sort of. Revisions to the Korean Animal Protection Act of 1991 clarified animal cruelty and inflated penalties. But a leading anti-dog meat group, International Aid For Korean Animals (IAKA), worries the amended law "fails to directly address the chief source of cruelty: Dog meat markets."

Korea's Food Sanitation Law of 1984 dubs dog soups (Boshintang) "disgusting foods." Dog-meat eateries stay licensed by renaming canine dishes. Under Korea's Livestock Product Sanitation and Inspection Act, dogs aren't "livestock" and can't be slain under agriculture laws. But Korea's Food and Drug Administration labels dog meat a "natural product," thereby legitimizing it for human ingestion.



Asian dog-cat meat markets

Animal welfare regulations are “paper laws” unless enforced and loophole-free. Filipino President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo signed the Anti-Rabies Act of 2007 to ban commerce in dog meat and control rabies through required dog vaccination. While the decree imposes steeper fines and jail time for each dog slaughtered or sold for meat, violators are unlikely to be punished until the government funds police training and backs prosecution.

Ultimately, legal incongruities fail to safeguard dogs and cats. Documentation of Asian wet markets reveals dogs, some in collars and apparently stolen, squashed inside fly-infested crates. Dogs are beaten with pipes and hammers to expel adrenaline, coveted for its “aphrodisiac” properties. Butchers believe a dog’s terror yields tender, profitable flesh.

In 2007, Humane Society International (HSI) teamed with Filipino police and animal groups to save nearly 100 dogs en route to slaughter. HSI investigators saw dogs with mouths bound in plastic cord, wrenched from cages and clubbed. Killers sliced their jugular veins and bottled spurting blood to sell.

In Korea, cats are “pests.” Collected in sacks, strays and former pets are slammed into the ground. Some are “liquefied” in pressure cookers for elixirs presumed to heal arthritis, neuralgia, and other human conditions. Photos show cats clinging to one another as workers pluck them from a box to boil and burn.

## HORSES ON THE MENU

Americans don’t eat their horses. Yet until 2007, foreign-owned plants processed horses for diners in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Japan and Mexico. On 9/21/07, the Illinois Seventh Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals upheld a ban on horse slaughter for human intake. The closure of Cavel International in DeKalb, IL mirrored earlier court-ordered shutdowns at Dallas Crown in Kaufman, TX and Belltex Corp. in Fort Worth, TX. As a result, spent racehorses, companions, Premarin-industry foals, draft horses, ponies, donkeys and mules were legally spared slaughter on U.S. soil. Still, over 100,000 horses were trucked to Canadian and Mexican kill floors in 2008.

Horses ride to kill plants in double-decked trailers that hurt their heads and necks. Food, water and rest are withheld. Horses arrive weak, injured or dead.

Slaughter (abroad or in U.S.) is excruciating for these excitable animals. USDA documentation verifies a violent process. Captive bolt stun pistols, ordinarily used for short-neck animals, fail to render horses insensible. In Mexico, investigative reports reveal horses thrashing in pain while stabbed at the withers until the spinal cord severs. Some are conscious as throats are slit.

## 2012 UPDATE: DOORS REOPEN TO U.S. HORSE SLAUGHTER, KILL INSPECTORS FUNDED AGAIN

— U.S. politicians talk about deep spending cuts...yet pass a 2012 Agriculture Appropriations bill that restores funding for horse slaughter inspectors? A 6-year ban on use of USDA taxpayer funds for slaughterhouse inspections is now gone. Without this loophole, states eager to kill horses have little to stop them.

Proponents consider this a “solution” for surplus horses who would otherwise endure neglect and starvation. The option to discard unwanted horses for slaughter absolves breeders and caretakers of illegal animal abandonment. Offenders should be criminally charged rather than permitted to profit from killing horses. Furthermore, a timely GAO report that sought to link equine abuse with termination of U.S. horse slaughter found no real evidence to back such claims.

**WHAT U.S. CITIZENS CAN DO:** Ask your Rep and Senators in U.S. Congress to support the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act.

## FICKLE FOR ANIMALS

In many nations, dogs, cats and horses get legal immunity from cruelty while farmed animals are seldom protected. A vast gap separates consumption from origin. Each year over 47 billion animals are slaughtered worldwide. In America 10 billion land animals, plus an estimated 17 billion fish, die for human ingestion. Every hour, roughly 1 million birds, pigs, cows and other perceptive beings are killed for food.

Meat, milk and eggs come from mega-farms where revenue overshadows welfare. In 2006 prosecutor Frank Forchione sought animal cruelty penalties for Wiles Farm, after viewing Humane Farming Association’s undercover images and notes. At the 2007 trial, Judge Stuart Miller, of Wayne County, Ohio, concluded that veterinary neglect of pigs with prolapsed vaginas and broken legs or backs did not

represent cruelty. Pigs bashed with hammers and flung into transport carts did not depict mistreatment.

When asked if hanging neck-chained pigs via forklift made them suffer, defendant Ken Wiles replied, “My pigs aren’t suffering.” Judge Miller wrist-slapped Wiles Farm with a \$250 fine and 1-year probation for Ken Wiles’ son Joe.

The justice system is uncertain where husbandry ends and cruelty begins. Animal welfare guidelines are rarely invoked. The U.S. Humane Slaughter Act doesn’t even cover chickens, turkeys, ducks, or geese.

In 2005 Ginny Conley, Acting Executive Director of West Virginia Prosecuting Attorney’s Institute, failed to convict 11 employees of Pilgrim’s Pride, a KFC supplier. A video exposed workers twisting off the heads of live chickens. They spat tobacco into the birds’ eyes and mouths, spray-painted faces, and crushed them against walls. Workers violated state animal cruelty statutes, but Conley rationalized: “[The case] needs to be handled more on a regulatory end than prosecuting someone criminally.”

In fact, a chicken’s aptitude is similar to a cat or dog. Chickens identify one another, nurture their young, build nests, and enjoy dust baths. At egg factories, 6 to 9 hens subsist in a battery cage no larger than a filing drawer. “Broiler chickens” and turkeys are squeezed into dark grower houses. To curtail fighting and cannibalism, workers amputate the bottom third of each bird’s beak.

When animals are distressed daily, cruelty loses its boundaries. Among 30 million U.S. cows killed yearly, at least 195,000 are downers — stockyard animals too sick or crippled to stand. Downers are beaten and dragged on severed bones and ligaments.

At intensive dry lot dairies, cows are kept artificially pregnant and lactating so machines can siphon their milk. Many are injected with Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH) and suffer bovine mastitis, an acute infection of the udder. After three to four years of exhaustive pregnancy cycles, dairy cows are slaughtered for beef.

Veal is a byproduct of the government-subsidized dairy industry. Within 24 hours of birth, male calves are auctioned to veal farms where they live chained by the neck inside two-foot wide crates. They are fed a liquid-only diet to suppress muscle growth and induce anemia.

Calves used for veal are denied maternal love. Though sensitivity to loss is considered a human attribute, evolutionary biologist Charles Darwin noted animal parents who grieve their missing young. “When a flock of sheep is scattered, the ewes bleat incessantly for their lambs, and their mutual pleasure at coming together is manifest.”

Nonhuman animals “have a point of view on what happens to them, their families, their friends,” writes Marc Bekoff, professor emeritus of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Colorado University, Boulder. “Nonetheless, their lives are wantonly and brutally taken in deference to human interests.”

If animals value interconnected lives, how do we reconcile consumption of some with compassion for others? Once it is clear the dog and the pig BOTH want to live, the pig becomes less of a thing and more of an individual.