



DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2019/0045, 19 February 2019

Consumption of dog meat in the UK

This pack has been prepared ahead of the debate to be held in Westminster Hall on Thursday 21 February 2019 on banning the consumption of dog meat in the UK. The subject for the debate has been selected by the Backbench Business Committee, and the debate will be opened by Jim Shannon MP.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

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1. Background

Foods and other products, such as alcohol, are generally regulated in the UK around their production and sale rather than their consumption. As a result, the regulation and licensing of food production and sale prevents dog meat being legally and commercially available for consumption in the UK. However, there is no law explicitly banning the consumption of dog or cat meat. The Government's position is that the sale of dog meat for human consumption is already illegal, and that there is no evidence of it being consumed in the UK.

Calls to ban consumption of dog meat

Campaigners including the [World Dog Alliance](#), and [several MPs](#), have called for the consumption of dog meat to be explicitly banned. Although there is an acceptance that it is not a major issue in this country, campaigners argue that it would send an important message to other countries.

There is currently an [Early Day Motion](#) on dog meat with 24 signatures calling for the [Animal Welfare Act 2006](#) to be amended "to make the eating of dog meat in the UK illegal and to close the loophole that is there at present".¹ In addition, a [parliamentary petition](#) calling for a ban on the killing of dogs or cats for the purpose of meat consumption was launched on 17 February 2019, and had 1,785 signatories by 20 February 2019.

When addressing the Backbench Committee on the proposal for a debate on banning the consumption of dog meat Jim Shannon set out the reasons as follows, making particular reference to recent legislation in the US:

I think it is obscene, gross and immoral that someone could, technically speaking, cook a dog and eat it themselves and they would not be doing anything illegal, but if it were to be sold in a shop—I am not being facetious; I have been quite honest about the issue, because I feel strongly about it, as do many other hon. Members who have put their name to the application. They recognise the loophole in the law.

I am aware that the eating of dogs happens in other countries, such as China and Vietnam. In the far east, it seems to be normal and some 30 million dogs have been slaughtered. A number of concerned charities are working on that, of which the World Dog Alliance is one, and they are pushing for the UK to show some moral leadership.

In December 2018, the USA passed a ban on the practice through provisions in their farm Bill. When we have a country the size of the USA that recognises the issue and takes the steps legally to prevent it happening, I think it is time that we in the United Kingdom look at the same thing.

Let us be honest: it is a simple thing to ask for. We should not have to have a debate on the matter—it should be simple—but we want to remind our Government here in the United Kingdom

¹ [EDM 1738](#) (session 2017-19) 23 Oct 2018

that it could be included in upcoming provisions on animal welfare.²

The decision taken in the US refers to the [Dog and Cat Meat Trade Prohibition Act of 2018](#):

This bill prohibits persons from knowingly slaughtering a dog or cat for human consumption. In addition, the bill prohibits persons from knowingly transporting, possessing, buying, selling, or donating: (1) a dog or cat to be slaughtered for human consumption, or (2) dog or cat parts for human consumption.

The Prohibition Act forms part of the [Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018](#) passed in December 2018, commonly referred to as the Farm Bill.³

During the presentation of a Ten-minute Rule Bill, [Dog Meat \(Consumption\) \(Offences\)](#), on 19 February 2018 Bill Wiggin set out the reasoning for proposing ban. He highlighted the poor welfare standards in countries where dog meat is consumed, and moves by a number of other countries where there is no consumption of dog meat to introduce a ban:

It may seem extraordinary, but consuming dog meat is currently not illegal in the UK. Luckily, there is no evidence that dogs are eaten in the UK yet, but due to the vile way in which dogs are treated in China, I would like our country to join in setting an example to the world. China argues that, until we make it illegal, why should they?

Two months ago, a ban on the human consumption of dog meat was passed in the United States, following Germany, Austria, South Australia, Taiwan and Hong Kong. This Bill is an opportunity for the UK Government to join those countries in introducing a ban, which is particularly important as the conditions under which dogs are farmed, transported and slaughtered are deliberately cruel. It is believed that inflicting suffering raises an animal's adrenaline levels, tenderising its meat and adding medicinal properties.⁴

Government position

The Government responded to a Parliamentary Question on 31 October 2018 to the call for banning consumption of dog meat, by highlighting that it is already illegal to sell dog and cat meat for human consumption:

It is already illegal to sell dog and cat meat for human consumption and the Government has seen no evidence that dog or cat meat is being sold or consumed in this country.⁵

In response to a question in December 2018 on the US ban on the human consumption of dog meat the Government stated:

We are aware that the USA has legislated to ban the slaughter of dogs for human consumption although we have not discussed the specific issues with the US Administration.⁶

² [Backbench Committee](#), HC Deb, Tuesday 5 Feb 2019

³ BBC News, [Dog meat ban: MPs call for UK to follow the US in outlawing the practice](#), 13 December 2018

⁴ Ten-minute Rule Bill, [Dog Meat \(Consumption\) \(Offences\)](#), 19 February 2019 c1374

⁵ WA [HL10787](#) 31 Oct 2018 and WA [187378](#) 12 Nov 2018

⁶ WA [198763](#), 11 Dec 2018

In August, 2018 an article on the BBC News website quoted Theresa May's official spokesman responding to the US introduction of a ban:

The commercial trade in dog meat in the UK is illegal, but we will look closely at the decision taken in the US.

Britain is a nation of animal lovers and we continue to have some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world.

We wish to maintain that.⁷

⁷ BBC news, [Call for a ban on people eating dog meat in the UK](#), 7 August 2018

2. News items

BBC News Online

13 December 2018

Dog meat ban: MPs call for UK to follow the US in outlawing the practice

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-46553064>

Associated Press

13 December 2018

Dog and Cat Meat Prohibition Act Passes House and Senate

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20181213005471/en/>

Times [subscription]

17 October 2018

A dog meat ban in Britain would send a message around the world – Dr Lisa Cameron MP

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/a-ban-on-eating-dog-meat-in-britain-would-send-a-message-around-the-world-lpbq022lv>

iNews

7 August 2018

There's no evidence of a spike in dog meat consumption in the UK

<https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/eating-dog-meat-britain/>

Politics Home

6 August 2018

PM under pressure to ban eating of dogs in Britain

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/environment/news/97389/pm-under-pressure-ban-eating-dogs-britain>

3. Press release

Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation joins campaign to ban the human consumption of dog meat in the UK

Co-Founder of the Conservative Animal Welfare Foundation Lorraine Platt joins campaign to ban the human consumption of dog meat in the UK.

Lorraine Platt met with representatives from the World Dog Alliance (WDA) – an international animal welfare charity – on the 9th January to discuss their campaign to ban the human consumption of dog meat in the UK.

The WDA are calling on the government to pass legislation that will uphold the UK's position as a global leader in animal welfare. Whilst laws in the UK ban the commercial trading of dog meat, and the slaughter of dogs in abattoirs, it is still legal to eat dogs in our country.

Internationally, 30 million dogs are killed for their meat every year. It is estimated that 70% are stolen pets. These animals are often subjected to extremely cruel practices for their meat – many being tortured, skinned and boiled alive. The WDA are calling for a full ban to send an unequivocal message that this despicable act is not welcome in the UK or anywhere around the world. A ban here will send a powerful signal to encourage other nations, where dogs are eaten, to introduce a ban.

In December 2018, the USA banned the human consumption of dog and cat meat in the Farm Bill. This ban was passed even though eating dogs is clearly not an issue in the US. The US passed the ban to explicitly demonstrate that eating dogs is not acceptable and to show unity with other nations that have a ban. It is now time for the UK government to follow suit.

The USA joins other counties and regions around the world in banning the disturbing practice, including: Germany, Austria, Taiwan and Hong Kong and South Australia.

The UK campaign, championed by a cross-party team of MPs, has been featured in BBC Politics Online, The Sun and iNews.

It is now time to urge the UK government to follow the USA in banning the consumption of dog meat and maintain its place as a global leader in animal welfare.

To find out more about the World Dog Alliance and their campaign to ban the consumption of dog meat in the UK, please visit <https://bandogmeat.uk/>

We have called for a UK Ban on the consumption of dog meat in two letters to the Secretary of State in January and February 2019.

Giles Watling MP has tabled an amendment to the Agriculture Bill for a ban.

Bill Wiggin MP will lead a 10 Minute Rule Bill (Dog Meat Consumption Offences) on Tuesday 19 February.

Jim Shannon MP has a Westminster Hall debate 'Banning the consumption of dog meat in the UK) on Thursday 21st Feb at 3pm.

We ask MPs to attend and support these important events.

4. Parliamentary material

Ten-minute Rule Bill

Dog Meat (Consumption) (Offences)

19 February 2019 | Volume 654 c1374-

<http://bit.ly/2EjGWZ6>

Bill Wiggin

I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make it an offence to consume dog meat and to transport, possess or donate dog meat for the purpose of consumption; and for connected purposes.

Tragically, around the world, 30 million dogs a year are eaten, and more than 10 million of them are killed in China alone. In the Republic of Korea, dog meat is the fourth most consumed meat after pork, beef and chicken. More than 450 tonnes of dog meat were imported to Japan between 1997 and 2017. The dog slaughter industry is worth between \$220 million and \$273 million.

Eating dog meat has long-standing cultural significance in many east Asian countries, where many consumers believe it to have medicinal value and to bring good fortune, yet none of the alleged health benefits has any scientific basis. Instead, eating dog meat fuels an unspeakably cruel trade involving animal torture.

It may seem extraordinary, but consuming dog meat is currently not illegal in the UK. Luckily, there is no evidence that dogs are eaten in the UK yet, but due to the vile way in which dogs are treated in China, I would like our country to join in setting an example to the world. China argues that, until we make it illegal, why should they?

Two months ago, a ban on the human consumption of dog meat was passed in the United States, following Germany, Austria, South Australia, Taiwan and Hong Kong. This Bill is an opportunity for the UK Government to join those countries in introducing a ban, which is particularly important as the conditions under which dogs are farmed, transported and slaughtered are deliberately cruel. It is believed that inflicting suffering raises an animal's adrenaline levels, tenderising its meat and adding medicinal properties.

This Bill, therefore, is not just about consuming dogs but about the extra suffering and cruelty involved. Humane Society International, the animal protection organisation, has reported the appalling conditions to which dogs are subjected. Usually forced into tiny cages, many dogs suffer broken limbs as they are transported vast distances, often without food or water. Poor sanitation, parasite infestations and disease outbreaks spread quickly in crowded conditions.

A 2007 study by Vietnam's National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology found that two in 10 sick dogs in Hanoi slaughterhouses were rabid. Some dogs are force-fed with a tube down their throat to boost their weight before slaughter. Nearly half the dogs die before reaching their final destination. Injured, dehydrated and exhausted, the dogs that are still alive face unspeakably cruel deaths. Routine methods of slaughter include bludgeoning, hanging, boiling, skinning and blow-torching alive. The dogs are then consumed.

The city of Yulin in China hosts an annual dog meat festival that is infamous for its inhumane slaughtering methods, which are practised at over 100 slaughter sites around the city, including crowded markets, in the streets and outside schools. The dogs, some of which are puppies, are tortured and killed in front of each other. During the 10-day festival, 2,000 to 5,000 dogs are killed each day. Over 230 tonnes of dog meat are consumed each year at that festival alone. I hope the House would agree that the sheer scale, as well as the unnecessary cruelty, is truly shocking.

In the UK, we spend £10 billion a year on our 8.9 million pet dogs. They provide companionship and love and, for many people, they are part of the family. Dogs are used by the police, our armed forces, in therapy and, of course, as guide dogs. Our laws usually reflect the respect that dogs deserve, and this Bill fits with our long and proud tradition of support for and insistence on the highest standards of animal welfare. As a nation of dog lovers and champions of animal protection, the UK must enact a ban on trading and consuming dog meat.

If the animal cruelty were not bad enough, the human suffering cannot go unnoticed. In China, an estimated 70% of dogs slaughtered for consumption are stolen pets. Anybody whose pet has gone missing knows the worry and fear for the future of their loved pet, the anguish and concern over what has happened, or simply having to wonder, "Where is my dog?" At least in the UK we know our missing dogs will not be eaten.

In China, dog-snatching gangs are hired by butchers to supply cheap animals. Increasingly bold, these gangs are often armed with machetes and Tasers. The dog meat trade normalises violence and fuels both animal and human abuse. For the sake of the tortured animals, the victims of crime and the exploited workers, it is vital that the UK takes steps to end this cruel industry.

In 2015, the World Dog Alliance organised a petition to urge the South Korean Government to act, and it received more than 100,000 signatures from UK citizens. In response, the South Korean Government closed the nation's biggest dog meat market ahead of the 2018 winter Olympics. Fortunately, many countries recognise the value of contributing to this global effort, with the United States being the latest to introduce a ban. That ban was passed two months ago, even though, like here, dog meat consumption is not a problem in America. Last week, a group of US Congressmen and former Representative Jeff Denham wrote directly to our Prime Minister urging the Government to

introduce a ban, emphasising the need for an international condemnation of dog meat consumption.

I am proud to have campaigned for tougher sentences for animal cruelty, and I am proud that the mistreatment of animals in the UK, and across the globe, has always been an important concern of our Government. My hon. Friend the Member for Clacton (Giles Watling) has tabled an amendment to the Agriculture Bill that would enable the House to support the ban on consuming pets. The hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) will introduce a Westminster Hall debate on this topic on Thursday.

It is helpful that this issue has support from MPs on both sides of the House, and it is certainly an issue that my constituents, and the wider population, care deeply about. I am sure that anyone who takes animal welfare seriously would join my colleagues and me in condemning the vile torture and slaughter of dogs. Making it an offence to consume dog meat, or to transport, possess or donate dog meat for the purpose of consumption, would highlight our country's commitment to outlawing the practice globally and would cement the UK as a champion of animal welfare.

Question put and agreed to.

Ordered,

That Giles Watling, Andrew Rosindell, Dame Cheryl Gillan, Sir David Amess, Scott Mann, Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger, Daniel Kawczynski, Sir Henry Bellingham, Damien Moore, Royston Smith, Tracey Crouch and Bill Wiggin present the Bill.

Bill Wiggin accordingly presented the Bill.

Bill read the First time; to be read a Second time on Friday 22 March, and to be printed (Bill 337).

PQ

[Dogs. Meat](#)

Asked by: Gwynne, Andrew

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions officials of his Department has had with colleagues in the US Administration on the recent ban on the human consumption of dog meat in that country.

Answering member: David Rutley | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

It is already illegal to sell dog and cat meat for human consumption and the Government has seen no evidence that dog or cat meat is being sold or consumed in this country. We are aware that the USA has legislated to ban the slaughter of dogs for human consumption although we have not discussed the specific issues with the US Administration.

HC Deb 11 December 2018 | PQ 198763

EDM

[DOG MEAT](#)

That this House calls for the UK Animal Welfare Act 2006 to be amended to make the eating of dog meat in the UK illegal and to close the loophole that is there at present.

EDM 1738 (session 2017-19)

5. Useful links

All-party Parliamentary Dog Advisory Welfare Group

<https://apdawg.co.uk/>

World Dog Alliance

<https://www.worlddogalliance.org/>

Commons Library briefing paper *Dog meat trade*

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7360/CBP-7360.pdf>

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