

# Killing dogs for meat ruled illegal by South Korean court

Landmark decision against dog farm could pave way for eating of canines to be outlawed

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**A South Korean court has ruled the killing of dogs for meat is illegal, in a landmark decision that animal rights activists have said could pave the way to outlawing the eating of canines.**

The meat has long been a part of South Korean cuisine, with about 1 million dogs believed to be eaten annually, but consumption has declined and the practice is now something of a taboo among younger generations amid increased pressure from activists.

A ruling from the city court in Bucheon on Thursday, in a case brought by the animal rights group Care against a dog farm operator, said meat consumption was not a legal reason to kill dogs.

The group accused the man, who was convicted and fined 3m won (£2,050), of killing animals without proper reasons and violating building and hygiene regulations.

“It is very significant in that it is the first court decision that killing dogs for dog meat is illegal itself,” said Kim Kyung-eun, a lawyer for Care.

The precedent paved the way for outlawing dog meat consumption entirely, she added.

Dog meat consumption is a grey area in South Korean law. Despite no specific ban, authorities have invoked hygiene regulations or animal protection laws that ban cruel slaughter methods to crack down on dog farms and restaurants ahead of international events such as the Pyeongchang Olympics.

A lawmaker from the ruling Democratic party introduced a bill in parliament this week that would effectively ban killing dogs for meat. There are about 17,000 dog farms in South Korea, and operators have called for the government to bring in laws explicitly to legalise dog meat consumption and license dog slaughter houses.

A survey last year found that 70% of South Koreans do not eat dog meat, but only about 40% believe the practice should be banned.

Care said it would track down dog farms and slaughter houses across the country with a view to filing similar complaints against them to judicial authorities. “The dog meat industry will take greater heat because of the court ruling,” said its leader, Park So-youn.

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**Agence France-Presse in Seoul**

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