

What is that they're wearing?





It could be some of your best friends.

AN EIGHTEEN-MONTH-LONG UNDERCOVER investigation has exposed one of the dirtiest little secrets of the global fur industry: the brutal and cruel slaughter of companion animals—dogs and cats—for the fur trade. The investigation was a joint effort by The Humane Society of the United States/Humane Society International (HSUS/HESI) and Manfred Karremann, a German independent journalist.

Investigators estimate the annual death toll to be more than 2 million dogs and cats. And for what? For full-length and short coats and jackets. Fur-trimmed garments. Hats. Gloves. Decorative accessories. Even toy stuffed animals. All made with the fur of dogs and cats. Dogs and cats no different from our pets, cruelly killed to make products sold to unwary consumers who generally have no way to know what they're buying.

TRADE IN DOG PELTS is sometimes an outgrowth of government-endorsed stray dog eradication programs. In 1995 a furrier in Mongolia added dog fur to its inventory of marmot, fox, sable, and lamb. The dog pelts came from the city of Ulan Bator's population of strays. In one year alone more than 8,000 dogs were shot, their fur fashioned into coats which were sold in Mongolia and Russia. The manufacturer of the coats said at least 10 dogs were needed to make one fur coat—more, if puppies were used.

ONE CHINESE COMPANY reportedly sells 10,000 dog and cat fur coats to Russia each year and claims that companies in Europe use dog skin in shoes and handbags and use dog fur in fur trim, though it may not be identified as dog fur.

THE DOGS SLAUGHTERED in China are mostly German shepherds whose gray or yellow fur is considered desirable for coats and trim. Gray is considered the better fur and is priced a bit higher than the yellow. Investigators were told that the gray fur of German shepherds is sometimes labeled fox or Asiatic raccoon or one of many other pseudonyms. As trim, the fur bears a striking resemblance to that of coyote, raccoon, or other species commonly exploited for use as trim.



Investigators followed the blood trail from the sources. They witnessed firsthand the slaughter of domestic dogs and cats, some of whom were raised on breeding farms, others who were rounded up as strays, and still others who were obviously pets and had probably been stolen. They documented fur sales at auction houses in Europe—sales attended by buyers from many countries, including the United States. Along the way they encountered killers, sellers, middlemen, and buyers. And where did the trail of death end? With the fur-buying public around the world, including the United States.

Of course millions of other animals are killed each year for vanity products—including mink, fox, raccoon, and more than a dozen other species. Consumers, designers, retailers, and store buyers have been able to distance themselves from the cruelty and needless death that are part of the fabric of every fur garment or accessory by somehow viewing "fur" animals as less capable of suffering than pets. By falsely suggesting that "fur ranchers" employ "husbandry" methods that take good care of animals while they're alive and provide humane, painless death at the end. Even by making the case that some animals—mink, for example—are a species less sympathetic or appealing and, so, less worthy of concern.

None of those arguments could even be considered about the dog and cat fur trade, which we found to be nothing less than barbaric and heartless. Documentation from this investigation, including many hours of videotape footage and hundreds of photographs, shows that the methods of housing, transporting, and slaughtering dogs and cats may be unparalleled in their cruelty.

CRUELTY AT THE SOURCE

There have been sporadic reports of dogs and cats being killed for their fur in a number of countries, including Mongolia, Korea, Australia, and the United Kingdom. This investigation focused on China—a country believed to be a major source of dog and cat fur, as well as representative of the trade in these pelts—where we were able to develop leads and connections to provide us with undercover access.

Investigators visited state-run "animal by-products" companies in Beijing and in the provinces of Hebei, Heilongjiang, and Henan to uncover detailed information on the manufacture and trade of dog and cat fur. China also has a thriving business in dog meat; cat meat is reportedly eaten only in Canton.

We learned that dogs and cats are generally raised on breeding farms, mostly in northern China where the colder climate enhances the quality and thickness of the animals' coats. Anywhere from 5 to 300 dogs may be kept in stock at dog farms; up to 70 cats may be kept at cat farms. Many times, dogs and cats killed for fur don't come from a formal breeding operation. A Chinese family may simply keep a few cats, or a dog or two, then during the winter when the annual slaughter season begins, the family will kill the animals and take the pelts to market. Many villages have open-air fur markets that serve as



Dogs in China suffer unspeakable terror and pain before being slaughtered for their fur and flesh. Stuffed into sacks for transport, left in the cold without food or water, then cruelly killed. Even the youngest—puppies—are not spared.

collection points for the pelts of dogs and cats killed locally.

Investigators visited one dog farm several hours north of the city of Harbin. They documented live dogs in an unheated room in the bitter cold, surrounded by the bodies of dead dogs hanging from hooks. Some of the live dogs were destined to be sold and eaten in Harbin, their fur sold to the fur trade. The dogs were packed into sacks and transported by motor vehicle to a slaughterhouse—a journey of several hours.

In Harbin investigators witnessed dogs kept in a dark, unheated building in the cold of February without food or water. They were tethered by thin metal wires. Investigators were told that the butcher at this place kills 10 to 12 dogs a day, selling their flesh and fur, and that his wife often transports the dogs from the breeding farms in the north.

For some of the dogs brought to Harbin, the journey wasn't over. Because some restaurants (most often Korean) want really fresh meat, some of these hapless dogs were once again put into sacks, then taken to their final destination. At one restaurant the investigator watched as a dog was taken out of a sack. The others were left in the sack on the icy ground. (As each dog was taken out and killed, the others could hear its screams

AT ONE RESTAURANT the dog was taken out of the sack. He was wagging his tail . . . videotape shows a German shepherd dog blinking his eye as he was being skinned by the Harbin butcher.

—Information from Investigator's Report

A German shepherd in Harbin (China) is tethered by a wire noose, then stabbed in the groin, his lifeblood pouring onto the snow. When the skinning begins, dogs like this may still be alive and conscious. Their flesh is served in restaurants; their fur sold to the global fur trade.





Cat furs, both dressed skins and finished garments, were openly displayed in this Chinese fur and leather company in Beijing. These photos alone represent the suffering and death of hundreds of cats. Below, a "special" fur plate made of cat heads.



HSUS/Karremann



AT A FUR MARKET in a town some 300 miles north of Jinan, investigators saw fox, rabbit, and other kinds of fur, including, by their estimate, thousands of dog and cat furs, offered in shops around the market.



INVESTIGATORS were told by a middleman in the Chinese fur trade that any label could be put in any garment or fur product, depending on the preference of the buyer—in other words, the company supplying the fur was perfectly willing to label dog or cat fur as being fur from some other species, a species presumably more acceptable to consumers.



and cries.) According to the investigator, the first dog he saw reacted as any dog would as he was taken out into the light—he showed his trust by wagging his tail. The wagging stopped when the butcher tied the dog up short with a metal wire so the dog could hardly move. The dog began to panic and tried to escape. But the butcher lifted the dog's left hind leg and stabbed him in the groin area. Blood began to pour. The dog howled in pain and struggled more. With every move, the wire cut into the dog's neck. After a couple of minutes, the butcher began to skin the dog.

As horrifying as this scene was, it got worse. An investigator reported that he saw dogs being butchered who were still conscious as the skinning began, and investigators videotaped a German shepherd blinking his eye as he was being skinned.

In China investigators saw some dogs killed for their fur who appeared to be thick-coated mixed breeds, perhaps chow chow mixes. But most of the dogs breed and killed for the fur trade are German shepherds, the same courageous and noble breed that leads the blind, rescues the victims of disasters, and patrols our streets in partnership with police officers all across America.

Cats fare no better than dogs in China. At a thriving fur market 300 miles to the north of the city of Jinan, in the province of Hebei, investigators located cat breeding farms and a factory that processes cats into furs. According to people at the fur market and the factory, the cats are killed by hanging. Or they may be hung from a wire while water is poured down their throats through a hose until they drown. Then a slit is made in the cat's stomach, the skin is opened, and the fur is pulled over the cat's head. The furriers say that the cats may still be alive while they are being skinned. What's important to the skinners is that the cat's skin is preserved as much as possible in one piece to optimize its usefulness.

Factory workers sort cat furs by color. Investigators were told that more than 100,000 cat furs were in storage at that one factory alone.

Ironically, long-haired cats are kept as pets in China. Short-haired cats, especially gray cats and orange tabby cats, are kept outside, generally tethered by wire, and raised for their pelts. Estimates are that about a half million cats are killed each season, from October to February.



HSUS/Karen Wain

At a factory in China, investigators saw piles of dog furs that were dyed, then manufactured into coats and jackets in the same factory. The high quality of some of the finished garments could undoubtedly deceive many consumers. In fact, many dyed dog fur coats like those at right are virtually indistinguishable from fur such as mink or fox.



HSUS/Karen Wain

This particular shipment was destined for Russia. Each box contains approximately eleven dog-fur coats. Each coat is made from approximately fifteen dogs. The boxes seen in this photo alone represent the suffering and death of at least 3,630 domestic dogs.



HSUS/Karen Wain

This showroom in China displayed dozens of mink and fox coats alongside full-length coats made from dog and cat fur.



Investigators purchased these toy dogs in China—life-like replicas of pets, made with the fur of slaughtered dogs.



Death by the Numbers

- One Chinese company told investigators that it had 50,000 cat skins and 50,000 dog skins in stock.
- At one German auction alone, 10,000 Korean dog fur pelts were available.
- One shipment from a Chinese company to the Czech Republic, reportedly for the Czech army, contained 5,329 kilograms (11,924 pounds) of "house cat skin jackets + plates," representing the slaughter of 40,000 to 55,000 cats.
- One Chinese fur factory told investigators that it had 100,000 cat skins stored in its factory.
- Documents detailing the export of "house cat skin jackets and plates" from a Beijing company to a company in the Czech Republic indicate that the number of cats killed for just one shipment totaled 40,000 to 55,000, possibly more (calculation based on total weight of the pelts).
- One shipment from China to Italy was seized for lack of proper permits. It contained 4.7 tons of dog hides.



Shoppers in Germany don't have to go far out of their way to buy fur. These cat fur pelts, jackets, and throws were on display at a gas station.



The European Connection

Although the same countries that kill cats and dogs for their fur produce finished garments, the success of the fur trade depends on exporting pelts to other countries. Investigators found evidence of the use and sale of dog and cat fur in Germany, Italy, and France. And from those countries, fur products are distributed worldwide.

Germany

Reports in the European press pointed to significant imports of cat and dog fur into Germany. Investigators contacted exporters, manufacturers, and auction authorities in an attempt to track the use of dog and cat fur; they found that dog fur, known in Germany as gae-wolf, is widely available as jackets and coats, particularly at the lower end of the German fur market. It isn't clear, however, whether consumers understand that gae-wolf means "domestic dog."

Investigators found gae-wolf garments for sale over the Internet on a German Web site. They also learned that at just one sale in April 1997, a German fur auction house offered 10,000 dressed Korean gae-wolf furs. According to auction authorities, the fur was from dogs killed the previous November and December. Most of the dog furs sold at the auction were purchased by a Belgian furrier. Proving the point once again that dog and cat fur is just part of the global fur industry, investigators noted that other furs available at the same auction were fox (110,000), mink (85,000), and an assortment that included muskrat, bobcat, badger, and nutria. Auction house employees said some of their customers come from the United States, though most are from Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

Investigators also met with the owner of one German company prominent in the cat fur trade. The company obtains cat furs from China and has cat fur garments manufactured in Greece. The owner estimated that at least half a million cat pelts change hands each year in the international fur trade. The company used cat fur and skin for gloves, waistcoats, foot muffs, and a variety of products for the treatment of rheumatism, including bandages and bedwarmers.

Italy

For years Italy has imported dog furs and skins from China and elsewhere for the manufacture of fur linings and insoles for shoes and boots, as well as other products. In the early 1990s, one Italy-based ski equipment company, Tecnica S.p.A., gained notoriety for using China-exported dog fur in boot



The cruelty begins in China and other countries with the killing of dogs and cats for their fur and skins. But the end products are sold all over the world. In the top photo, a "fur and fashion" show in Frankfurt at which dog and cat fur garments are displayed along with furs made from a variety of other animals. In the bottom photo, the home office of an Italian company that investigators say imports dog skins from China.



GAE-WOLF IS A POPULAR FUR for jackets and coats in Germany. But how many Germans know that gae-wolf is actually dog fur, in all likelihood imported from Korea or China where dogs are bred and slaughtered under the cruelest conditions? How many Germans know that the fur they're wearing is most often that of their own revered breed, the German shepherd?

A GERMAN IMPORTER told investigators that export of dog and cat fur goods to the United States is not a problem, explaining, "It is just a question of the declaration [what the product is called]." This is another testament to the apparently common practice of mislabeling products to disguise the use of dog and cat fur.



U.S. consumers can buy an endless array of fur-trimmed items at virtually any department store. But what are they buying? The ear muffs are labeled as being rabbit fur. The coat trim is labeled as "blue fox." The glove trim is simply labeled "Genuine fur." The point of origin for the fur used on these items is China. Without DNA testing, investigators—or consumers—can't be sure the fur is really rabbit or fox, not dog or cat.

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 SHELL 65% FURFEETER
 25% COTTON
 LINING 100% COTTON
 TRIM MONGOLIA DOG FUR
 FILLER ROANO DUCK DOWN
 (F.Y.C.)
 CARE INSTRUCTION
 PROFESSIONAL FUR CLEAN
 ONLY.



The trim on the jacket shown above is identified on the label as "Mongolia dog fur." The jacket was purchased from a major retailer with stores around the United States. DNA testing confirmed that the fur was that of a domestic dog.

linings. These boots were sold in the United States. At least one other Italian leather-goods manufacturer was identified by investigators as importing dog pelts from China.

France

France may be a country of dog lovers, but investigators found that dog fur imported from China is used to make jackets sold mainly in the French Alps. Documentation shows that one French company had 2,000 dog fur plates on hand, with another 1,000 expected to arrive within the month. A pricing sheet from the company shows that in addition to dog fur (which is called *loup d'Asie*, or "wolf of Asia"), the company offers furs and skins of goat, pony, reindeer, and antelope.

The Effect on U.S. Consumers

The extent to which dog and cat fur products are for sale in U.S. stores cannot be known. But investigators have found jackets with fur labeled "Mongolia dog fur" in a major retailer with stores across the country. Many other fur-trimmed items look and feel like the cat and dog fur investigators saw in factories in China and at retailers and other companies in Europe.

The problem is that it's not easy—in fact, it's not possible—to identify many fur items. Each year millions of animal fur pelts are imported into the United States from countries all over the world, including China and other Asian countries.

Statistics on fur and leather imports and exports are kept by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. But species-specific data are recorded only for certain animals. A wide range of pelts and fur-skin products are grouped together in one category, designated NESOI (Not Elsewhere Specified or Otherwise Indicated). This category includes pelts from any species of animal not specifically defined by the bureau, including cats and dogs. Federal law in no way prohibits the importation of domestic dog or cat pelts into the United States.

Investigators learned that many companies and individuals involved in the trade of cat and dog fur use ambiguous terms and mislabeling to disguise the true identity of their products.

Complicating the labeling issue even more, 1998 amendments to the U.S. Fur Products Labeling Act exempt from labeling requirements all fur products costing less than \$150—a price range into which most fur-trimmed garments and accessories fall.

WHEN CAT FUR is dyed it is not easily distinguished from other furs.

—President of a German company prominent in the cat fur trade

The Price of Suffering

- At a German auction, one Korean dog fur (German shepherd) was \$9.
- At one Chinese company dealing in "animal by-products," a fur "plate" of 6 to 8 gray or orange cat pelts may be purchased for \$21. Two plates make a short jacket. Three plates make up a coat. That's 12 to 16 cats who suffer and die for each jacket, 18 to 24 cats killed for each coat. Cat-head plates are also available at this factory—36 cat heads per plate, at a price of \$15.
- A Beijing company declared its ability to export 20,000 cat skins as well as 20,000 dog skins between January and March 1998. In January the company had in stock the pelts of 50,000 cats and 50,000 dogs. Gray and orange cat pelts were \$2.60 each; gray and yellow dog pelts were \$8.50 each.
- Gray and orange cat skins at one Chinese company, were priced at \$2.60 each; gray and yellow dog skins were \$8.50 each.
- A fur plate of 6 to 8 cats was priced at \$21 at one Chinese company.
- At one Chinese factory, one cat skin cost \$.50; at another, \$2.00; in Beijing, \$2.15.

OTHER MAJOR ITEMS of production (aside from fox and mink) include weasel, kolinsky, *goupee* (an animal unique to China), fox, rabbit, leopard cat, squirrel and lamb. [Emphasis added—"goupee" is another term for dog fur.]

—*Fur Age Weekly* (1995)

DOG FUR—Also Known As or Labeled As:

Gao-wolf
Sobaki
Asian jackal
Gou-pee
Goupee
Kou pi
Gubi
China wolf
Asian wolf
Pomern wolf
Loup d'Asie (wolf of Asia)
Asiatic raccoon dog
Coesac fox
Dogues du Chine

DOG SKIN—May Be Declared As:

Special skin
Lamb skin
Mountain goat skin
Sakhon Nakhon lamb skin

CAT FUR—Also Known As:

Housecat
Wild cat
Katzenfelle
Goyangi
Mountain cat

The "Mongolia dog fur"-trimmed jackets are not the first products to be openly labeled "dog fur" and sold in the United States. In 1994 Tecnica USA, an affiliate of Tecnica S.p.A. in Italy, paid a fine and halted importation of boots lined with dog fur. Animal lovers had protested the company's use of dog fur after it was reported that its after-ski boots carried a label marked, "trim: Chinese dog fur." These products were being sold in 600 stores around the United States. Company representatives in New Hampshire claimed the fur was from "a long-haired coyote type of dog," but few wild dogs inhabit Asia, and coyotes exist in the wild only in North and South America. It is reasonable to assume that there are more companies like Tecnica and more products like the "Mongolia dog fur"-trimmed jackets, yet undiscovered, using the fur of companion animals and selling it in U.S. stores.

In addition, investigators found a number of companies that expressed their ability and willingness to export cat and dog fur to the United States and companies that said they had exported dog fur to the United States in the past. U.S. citizens by the millions travel to Europe and Asia, where dog and cat fur products are sold every day, though the products are rarely labeled as such.

So the very real probability exists that American consumers could be buying dog and cat fur—in this country or while traveling—whether they mean to or not.

Conclusion

We are a nation of pet owners. There are an estimated 53 million owned dogs and 59 million owned cats in the United States. Few if any pet owners would knowingly subject their own beloved pets to the horror and pain suffered by dogs and cats caught up in the global fur trade. Yet can anyone be sure that the pair of fur-lined gloves or the fur-trimmed jacket in a department store isn't made—literally—from the misery of companion animals just like ours?

The truth is, we can't.

Nonlabeling, mislabeling, and the wide use of pseudonyms for cat and dog fur make it nearly impossible in many cases for virtually any consumer to know what he or she is buying, whether in the United States or when traveling. The trade in fur involves global interaction and exchange. Animals may be killed in one country, processed in another, and the finished garment or accessory sold in a store or market anywhere in the world.

That alone would be enough reason to stop buying fur. But there's more. The fact is that dog and cat fur is just a part of the fur industry—it's all connected, and the trade in domestic cat and dog fur and skin is closely linked to the mainstream fur trade. Investigators found that furriers dealing in all species of animals traditionally exploited for "pelt production" may trade in dogs and cats as well. The availability and use of dog and cat fur is documented in standard trade journals used in the fur industry. But it is unlikely that consumers know the truth, and it is probable that even retailers, store buyers, and designers may be unaware of the real source of some of the fur they buy or use.

The bottom line is that buying any fur product serves to support the fur industry as a whole and sends the message that fur is desirable instead of deadly.

Any demand for fur ensures that somewhere an animal is suffering and dying to fill that demand—maybe, in some cold, dark corner of the Earth, an animal just like your own pet.



HSUS/Karremann/Despojo



Innocent cats, many of them stolen pets, are slowly and cruelly strangled while other cats watch, terrified, and await their fate. The end product of this horror? Skin drums and other cat skin products sold around the world.



HSUS/Karremann/Despojo

THE SKIN TRADE

Investigators also went undercover to look into reports of horrific conditions at cat slaughterhouses in the Philippines and dog slaughterhouses in Thailand. We found that these activities were not specifically part of the fur trade, since these animals were killed primarily for their skin (though the corpses of dogs killed in Thailand are also used for meat, animal feed, lard, and aphrodisiacs).

The dog and cat skin trade is, like the fur trade, global in scope. Companies that use cat skins from the Philippines and dog skins from Thailand may also be using skins of dogs and cats killed in China and other countries. Any of these skins could be used in products made and sold in Asia, Europe, or even the United States.

What is different between the fur trade and the skin trade is the product. What is the same is the suffering.

Philippine Cat Slaughter

Investigators located one cat slaughterhouse on the island of Mindanao that may kill and skin as many as 100 cats on a given day.

Some skins are exported to Japan for use on drums and guitars. Only male cats are killed for their skins because the nipples of female cats reduce the usable size of the skin. This has led to a scarcity of male cats in the city where the slaughterhouse is located, and collectors now drive to distant cities to round up cats in the street. Some of these cats are strays, but according to sources in the Philippines, most are stolen pets. The cats are stuffed into sacks and driven to the slaughterhouse, a journey that can last up to six hours, without food or water.

While the owners of the cat slaughter operation are extremely wary



HSUS/Karremann/Despojo



HSUS/Karremann/Despojo



Animal Network:RMI/Karremann



Animal Network:RMI/Karremann

Thousands of dogs of every size and description—many of them stolen pets or strays—endure unimaginable fear and torture in Thailand's dog slaughterhouses.



Animal Network:RMI/Karremann



Animal Network:RMI/Karremann

of strangers, investigators were eventually able to get inside the facility. They found cats crammed into cages, some trying in vain to escape, others paralyzed with fear.

In 1996 the Philippine secretary of agriculture was quoted as saying the slaughter of cats was legal so long as the animals were humanely killed. There was nothing humane about the killing witnessed by the investigators.

One by one, cats were hung from their necks by ropes while other cats watched helplessly. They didn't scream, since the rope was pulled tighter and tighter as they struggled and slowly suffocated.

The cats were then skinned, and the skins were thrown into ice water. Later, workers scraped off the fat, then salted and folded the skins in preparation for packing and shipping. Each skin was valued at about \$12.50.

Thailand Dog Slaughter

Even though the government of Thailand largely disapproves of slaughtering dogs, as do most Thais, massive numbers of dogs are killed in the lucrative trade for dog flesh, hide, and other body parts. Investigators documented the slaughter of dogs in the vicinity of Sakhon Nakhon in northeast Thailand.

Many different breeds of dogs, collected from all over the country, are brought to Sakhon Nakhon to be killed. One estimate is that 30,000 dogs are killed in the area of Sakhon Nakhon monthly. Many of them are puppies.

Typically, dogs are brought into Sakhon Nakhon from other villages, crammed as densely as possible into a cage on the back of the collector's truck. The journey can take up to three days, and the dogs are denied food and water during the trip. By the time they reach the slaughterhouse, many are sick, some are dead. But their weakened state makes the dogs easier to kill.

It wasn't easy for the investigators to get inside the slaughterhouse because police investigations and unfavorable press reports have made workers suspicious of strangers. But the investigators eventually succeeded. There, they watched as workers sorted dog skins in the dim light.

The next night investigators watched a truck arrive at the slaughterhouse carrying 70 dogs—mixed breeds, German shepherds, and others. Some—possibly strays—were shy and frightened. Others—possibly stolen pets—looked well-groomed and trusting. All met the same fate.

Two men with heavy sticks stood ready atop the roof of a low structure onto which the dogs were unloaded. One dog after another, howling in terror, was pulled from the truck with a wire noose attached to a wooden catch pole. In plain view of the animals still inside the truck,

each dog was clubbed several times over the head and on the nose. The dogs screamed in pain. The victims were then thrown to the ground and dragged off by other workers to an area where their throats were slit. In graphic footage, investigators captured some dogs still moving their tails just before their throats were cut.

Our investigation found no evidence of cats being used as part of the Thai skin trade.

How Cat and Dog Skins are Used

In Germany investigators talked to the president of a company dealing in cat furs and skins. The company openly uses cat skin products as rheumatism aids. They make bandages, pulse warmers, and a variety of so-called "medicinal" products. Investigators also found dog skins sold in Germany as orthopedic products.

Elsewhere, dog and cat skins are not quite so visible. Just as labeling is a problem with fur, especially fur trim, knowing what kind of leather is being used in a product can be difficult or impossible. Dog skin may be declared as lamb skin, mountain goat skin, or even "special skin."

Some such products are undoubtedly sold in the United States. In fact, investigators found dog skin plasters in New York's Chinatown, sold in pharmacies as a cure for rheumatism. In addition, U.S. travelers to Europe, Asia, and elsewhere may run the risk of unwittingly buying dog and cat skin products.

Investigators have been told that dog and cat skins are used for:

- Apparel
- Bed sheets
- Car upholstery
- Drums and musical instruments
- Handbags and small leather goods
- Golf gloves
- Gardening gloves
- "Medicinal" and orthopedic products
- Sporting goods

In a particularly grisly twist, the skins of brutally slaughtered dogs in Thailand are mixed with other bits of skin to produce rawhide chew toys for pet dogs. Manufacturers told investigators that these chew toys are regularly exported to and sold in U.S. stores.



Trucks transport dogs crammed into cages on their terrifying journey to slaughter. The trip from villages across Thailand can last for up to three days while the dogs suffer without food, water, or shelter from the elements.



Rawhide chew sticks are many a dog's favorite treat. But chew sticks from Thailand may contain bits of skin from a variety of animals—including domestic dogs. These products are sold in pet supply stores throughout the United States.



IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR INVESTIGATORS to save the dogs bound for slaughter if they were to avoid detection. But they spotted one dog in a truck who seemed to symbolize the heartbreak of the entire abominable trade. He was a small black dog, not much more than a pup. He wore a collar, with a heart-shaped pendant bearing one word: Love. Was that his name? Was he some child's beloved pet? The investigators bought the dog, took him to their hotel, gave him food and water, took him to a veterinarian, then found him a safe and loving home, one far away from the horrors of Sakhon Nakhon.

SOURCES

Much of the information contained in this document was obtained by undercover investigators and is taken from their accounts of events they witnessed, from conversations with people engaged in the dog and cat fur and skin trades, and from documents obtained during the investigation. Investigators included HSUS/HSI staff and Manfred Karremann, a German independent journalist.

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Photography for cover, page 1 and page 12 by Giovanni Jackson.



The origin of the fur piece purchased in China was not identified—a typical problem for consumers who want to avoid buying dog and cat fur-trimmed items. But the fur is virtually indistinguishable from the fur of this pet golden retriever.

