

## Why Adopt 01.doc

### Why Adopt Rather Than Buy in Shanghai

- **When you buy a pet here, you REALLY don't know what you are getting.**

Many breeders/pet stores get their animals from cruel puppy/kitty farms where the animals are torn away from their mother before they are fully weaned. Just as in the pet markets, the majority of animals in pet stores here are weak and sick, although they might be fattened up or pumped with antibiotics to give the impression of being healthy. Most stores/markets don't have any return policy and once you walk out of the market you are on your own. And what about support if you have any questions or problems with your new pet? You might arrive home and three weeks later, you have a near-dead animal in your possession. And don't think the store will take it back either. At SCAA, we have heard many horrific stories about purchases that have ended tragically. Just because there is a storefront, it doesn't mean that pet stores are much better than the pet markets.

- **When you buy from a pet market, you are aiding and abetting a cruel industry.**

It breaks all of our hearts to walk through the pet/wet/bird markets in Shanghai. Baby kittens and puppies are on the brink of death, literally dying of thirst, crying out for us to buy them. That is what these sadistic vendors have in mind; to appeal to our hearts to pay to save these animals. Either that or for someone to come along and buy them to cook or to use their pelts for clothing, stuffed toy fur, etc.

Walk past these barbarians, scream at them if you must, but do not buy these animals. Every time you buy one, they just go get another, and you are abetting another cruel death...not only that, but the baby you have just saved is likely to die as well. Better yet, don't even go to the markets: boycott them; then call SCAA. Adopt and save a life. Our canines and felines are in as much need of love as those big eyes staring at you at the markets.

Overall, this is an issue much larger than such a small organization as SCAA can take on. These are issues that only the Chinese government can change from the top down. It is when policies change and animal protection laws are implemented and enforced that the conditions for animals in China overall will improve. This takes time and education, but it is slowly happening....remember it wasn't so long ago in Western countries that animals did not (and in most areas of the world still do not) have legal rights for protection. There are more and more local people who are starting to have pets for the first time, and conditions will indeed change. It may take a generation or two, but animal conditions will improve; that is why we are targeting the primary education system with information on general pet care, compassion for animals and the absolute need for spaying/neutering—it is today's children that will change the future, in all respect, here in China and worldwide.

- **Not all animal rescue organizations are the same.**

We won't name names, but not all animal rescue organizations here in Shanghai are the real thing. Although some of the very small local groups are doing good work on a case-by-case basis, there are others that are simply scam artists and are using the goodwill of their target audience and expatriates to "adopt" out animals that have not received adequate medical care, and have also been bought from markets at cheap prices to "adopt out" at higher prices. Adoption fees are more like "purchase" prices, and you are more likely to end up with a dead pet on your hand than a lifelong friend. Adopter beware! Since its inception in March 2005, SCAA has adopted out nearly 200 animals, with ALL receiving medical care from PAW Veterinarian Clinic and warnings being issued by loving adopting parents if the animal has medical problems. To date, NOT ONE animal has been returned (except due to allergies!) for medical reasons and our absolute policy is that if for any reason an adoption does not work out, we will

welcome back our beloved wards immediately. Our animals' welfare is our only concern and our members know this.

- **You're getting more for your money if you get a mixed breed.** Based on the well-established principle of "hybrid vigor," a mixed-breed animal is likely to live longer and cost less in vet bills than a pure breed. Many purebred dogs are prone to developing health problems ranging from breathing difficulties to hip dysplasia to an enlarged heart.
- **You get just as much love (if not more).** An adopted pet is every bit as loving, intelligent and loyal as a purchased pet, even if you get an adult or older animal.

By Carol A. Wolfson, Founder/Executive Director, SCAA