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Stray Dogs Cause Health Risks in Thailand

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INTRODUCTION TO PROBLEM

Although Thailand is facing economic and social challenges, the government is devoting little attention to the problem of stray dogs. However, the overpopulation and health threats that these dogs pose need to be addressed. Through my research, I am hoping to attain better knowledge on the problem while addressing a potential solution.

INITIAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the health risks that humans can contract via dogs?
- How is this issue being dealt with?
- What is the true extent of the stray dog population?
- What other issues is the Thai government facing?

METHOD OF RESEARCH

I explored sources focusing on epidemiology, psychology, economics, and veterinary sciences and evaluated their results to find a potential solution.

RESEARCH PROCESS

- I began my research with looking at epidemiology sources about the types of diseases that stray dogs can contract in South East Asia. This led me to seek out information about arthropods (ticks, lice) and rabies.
- While investigating the many diseases, I found that tropical climates increased the development rate of the arthropods that carried these diseases.
- A faster growth rate in arthropods could correspond to a higher infected dog population so this prompted me to check the actual stray dog population. However the number wasn’t as high as I thought, so I researched how many dogs were actually vaccinated and sterilized.
- The overpopulation prompted me to look into why there were so many stray dogs. Upon my research, I found that cultural and religious attitudes towards this animal plays an important part towards the overpopulation.
- Seeing as how this is a large problem for Thailand, I began to seek out the current and past actions that are and have been taken.
- Finalizing my research, I questioned what other social and economic problems were diversion of the Thai government from this issue.

CONCLUSION

Unfortunately it is unlikely that the stray dogs will become an priority any time soon because of other problems in Thailand diverting their attention. Mass sterilizations and vaccinations could reduce the overpopulation and diseases that could be passed on to people. However, an obstacle towards this are national economic problems, religious and cultural attitudes. Hopefully the rising desire to “westernize” will cause people to change their attitudes to help stray dogs. Sterilization and vaccinations have been tried in the past by the Thai government but not enough resources were allocated compared to the population of dogs to have an major impact.

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