

ing to the Koreans, because there is still a distinction between ‘meat dogs’ and ‘pet dogs.’”

In order to convert a large number of the 1,500-plus dog meat farms still in South Korea, HSI needs to involve the country’s government, which ideally would compensate the farmers for some of their costs, O’Meara says. A big motivation to provide such subsidies is the 2018 Winter Olympics, she notes, as the Games will be held in Pyeongchang, bringing heightened international attention to South Korea.

Conditions at Lee’s farm were miserable, says Lola Webber, a Change for Animals founder and an HSI consultant who has visited several times. Knee-high piles of feces lay beneath the wire cages. Dog carcasses and whole, feathered chickens had been left for animals to eat. When Webber approached adult dogs in their cages, they responded with extreme fear.

“I’ve never seen dogs behave this way in my life,” she says. “They were beyond terrified. They were fighting for their lives.” Some dogs bit. Others screamed. One curled up in a ball and lay shaking, as small as she could be.

With the conversions, the dogs will change, as will the farmers, Webber says. She watched as the first farmer to switch was transformed after pledging to end his involvement in the dog meat industry and expand his blueberry business. He went from handling his animals roughly, like commodities, to holding them gently and stroking them to soothe their fear. “I feel good in my heart,” he told her. “I’m glad they’re going to a new home.”

Many Koreans outside the trade are ashamed to talk publicly about it, but a veterinarian confided his feelings to Webber. In his father’s generation and his own, he explained, people ate dog meat because they were poor and it was relatively cheap. But the country is wealthy now, he told her, noting: “It’s my hope that my son will grow up in a Korea where no one eats dogs.”



Recent polling shows most Floridians are against reopening a bear hunt in the state.

FALSE PROMISE

HUNTING IS NOT THE ANSWER TO FLORIDA’S BEAR INCIDENTS

// BY SARAH KOWALSKI

ONE INCIDENT OCCURRED in a neighborhood where a resident had been purposely—and illegally—feeding bears. Another took place near an open grocery store trash bin, where bears had been seen eating almost nightly. In four of the recent cases where female black bears injured Florida residents, the animals had cubs with them.

When it comes to co-existing with its wild neighbors, Florida clearly has a junk food problem. But a small, vocal group of trophy hunters is using the situation to lobby for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to reopen bear hunting after a 21-year reprieve. The hunt could happen as early as this fall, even though Florida’s unique subspecies of black bear was just removed from the state’s threatened species list in 2012 and continues to face serious threats from habitat loss, genetic isolation and road mortality.

The push for a hunt is based on dubious claims. Studies show that hunting—which targets bears in the wild, rather than those who frequent urban and suburban areas—neither increases human safety nor reduces property conflicts. “There is no sign that shows that if you kill bears in the woods, it’s going to stop the bears that become acclimated to people and acclimated to eating out of trash cans,” says Laura Bevan, HSUS southern regional director.

Bevan, who worked on the campaign that helped secure the 1994 ban, points out that the recent incidents involving bears have all taken place in areas where the animals have easy access to human food sources. Kate MacFall, HSUS Florida state director, notes that Florida lags far behind other states in adopting bear-proof trash cans and nonlethal hazing programs to keep bears away from people. “Until the trash and other attractants are managed,” she says, “the bears will continue to be in neighborhoods.”

There have been small signs of progress. To support hazing efforts, The HSUS recently donated kits containing pepper spray and beanbag ammunition for distribution to law enforcement agencies. And the few communities that have embraced bear-proof trash cans have seen a marked decrease in bear problems. “They don’t get in the trash,” says Bevan. “They move on.”

+ TAKE ACTION: Florida residents can speak out about the proposed hunt at humansociety.org/floridabears.