

PRESS RELEASE

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S. Korea's Pet Population Hits 3.676 Million

Sejong, 1 July 2026 — On 29 June, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) published the findings of its 2025 Animal Protection and Welfare Survey. The full survey results are available on the ministry's website and the National Animal Protection Information System (www.animal.go.kr).

The cumulative number of registered companion animals reached 3.676 million, representing a 5.3% increase on the previous year. By contrast, the number of newly registered companion animals totalled 247,000, a decrease of 4.9% year on year.

A total of 96,000 lost or abandoned animals—including dogs, cats, rabbits, and chickens—were rescued, representing a 10.4% decrease on the previous year.

The number of rescued animals has declined steadily since 2019.

There were 236 animal protection centres operating nationwide, an increase of five centres (2.2%) on the previous year. These centres are operated either directly by local authorities or outsourced to external providers.

- Rescued animals (x 10,000): (2019) 13.6 → (2020) 13.0 → (2021) 11.8 → (2022) 11.3 → (2023) 11.3 → (2024) 10.7 → (2025) 9.6
- Animal protection centres: 236 centres nationwide (87 directly operated, up from 75 in the previous year; 149 run under contract, down from 156 in the previous year)

The number of companion animal businesses increased to 24,384, up 3.5% on the previous year, while total employment in the sector rose by 3.8% to 30,426.

By business type, pet grooming accounted for the largest proportion (44.5%), followed by boarding and care services (23.8%) and pet retail (11.4%).

Compared to the previous year, the number of transport, pet cremation and funeral, grooming, boarding and care, and exhibition businesses increased, while import, retail, and breeding businesses declined.

- Number of businesses: (2023) 20,575 → (2024) 23,565 → (2025) 24,384 (+3.5% year on year)
- Year-on-year increases: transport (+20.5%), pet cremation and funeral services (+7.2%), grooming (+6.6%), boarding and care (+3.4%), and exhibition (+0.2%)
- Year-on-year decreases: import (-11.5%), retail (-10.5%), and breeding (-4.5%)

Meanwhile, the number of animal protection officers appointed by local governments stood at 888. They identified 1,281 violations of the Animal

Protection Act. The most common offences involved inadequate animal management, including failure to keep dogs on a lead, accounting for 913 cases (71.3%), followed by 184 cases (14.4%) involving breaches of statutory requirements by business operators.