

## Ban on pets stirs up controversy



The community places several nets as threatening signs for wandering dogs. [Photo/cqcb.com]

A ban on pets in a residential community in Xiaoshan of Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang Province, has stirred up controversy, especially over whether the property management office's action is legitimate.

According to the notice issued by the office, in order to provide a "comfortable, safe and tidy environment" for all residents, the community had responded to the wishes of a wide range of property owners and would no longer allow pets in the compound. Those already owning pets were told to get rid of them within 15 days regardless of what method they used.

"I'm opposed to the way people raise their dogs," said an anonymous security guard in the community.

He went on, "Dog excrement is ubiquitous –on the lawns, gardens, elevator doorways, stairways or even underground parking lots. On some rainy days, people walked their dogs underground, where the stinky odor suffocated me, especially in the sultry summer in August, and I had to clean the room."

A property management office staff member surnamed Chen said the issue of the notice was a reluctant choice as many residents had complained their lives had been severely affected by the noise and waste of the pets.

“Although we cannot interfere with the ownerships of the pets that have been legitimized by registrations and issuance of certificates, we indeed hope that the pets they raise should not be allowed to cause environmental contamination and neighborhood disturbance,” he said.

After the notice was issued, the community placed several nets as threatening signs for wandering dogs, even though there is little chance for any animal to get caught, as few residents walk their pets anymore.

One dog owner commented online, “I can hardly imagine the ramifications of the notice concerning how the property management office will act against the pets after 15 days. It is ludicrous for a notice like that which bans us all to walk with pets simply because of the troubles caused by some irresponsible owners.”

The community, however is divided, with other residents supporting the decision of the property management office.

“I was scared one night when a dog of colossal size threw its entire weight on my car and almost overturned it,” another resident commented online. “The ferocious dogs raised in the community jeopardize the safety of residents.”

Zhang Jinfang, a lawyer from Zhejiang Tianfu Attorney Office, said that the right to raise pets is acceptable as long as they are well controlled, so that policies such as an arbitrary ban on pets were illegitimate and cruel.

However, the attorney also emphasized that people with legally-registered dogs that have been inoculated against diseases should always make sure that their dogs are kept on a leash outside, not allowed to bark beyond 30 to 50 decibels and should be kept away from children and pregnant women.

In addition, the owners should clear away any excrement in a timely manner to ensure clean public surroundings.