

《青岛限狗令英文报道 一户只许养一只狗》

Local officials in Qingdao, Shandong Province are imposing tougher measures on residential dog owners. Families living in downtown Qingdao are required to pay a RMB400 (\$US60) registration fee and can only own one-dog per household beginning this October 1. But dogs which have been registered before the new regulation won't be affected by it.

So-called "ferocious breeds," including German shepherds, St. Bernards, pit bulls, mastiffs and Siberian huskies are forbidden to dwell within the city's borders.

Dog owners must vaccinate their pets, obtain a license and visit one of 30 authorized veterinarians in the city to get an electronic chip implanted under the skin of the dog's neck.

The microchip is expected to store information about the animal, owner and vaccination records. Dog owners can visit the vet starting this Thursday (June 15).

Homeowners violating the policy, such as not registering their dogs or possessing more than one can be subject to fines up to RMB2000 (\$US300) or confiscation.

Protecting the public

Zhao Jun, a Qingdao public security bureau official, supports stringent measures, since more dogs have been biting residents and causing a nuisance on residential streets.

"Pet lovers and those who don't like dogs often have disagreements and some dogs negatively affect the city's environment and people's lives," China.org.cn quotes Zhao as saying.

He added, "The regulation came out after consideration of opinions of experts, officials and residents and after reviewing domestic and international experience."

In regard to introducing the strict one-dog policy, Qingdao is not the first Chinese city to implement the measure. Chengdu enacted the regulation in 2009, which was followed up by other cities nationwide.

Officials in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province in northeast China have enforced a ban on all dogs taller than 50-cm. and longer than 70-cm. Actually, Jiangmen, Guangdong Province sought to impose a total ban on dogs, which was halted after facing vigorous public scrutiny.

Is it too tough?

With rising prosperity and a growing Middle Class, more Chinese are raising dogs as pets. Some dog owners are generating income as breeders and Qingdao's new law could harm their business.

Of course, some dog owners fail to properly train their pets and are careless when taking them outdoors. But should all dog owners in Qingdao be punished on account of the few?

Heated debates have ensued over the one-dog policy. Some residents insist the new policy is necessary to ensure many dogs don't run wild on the streets, while others say they have a right to own more than one dog if they choose to do so.

According to figures cited by Yahoo News, most Chinese pet owners are under 45 and dogs account for 62 percent of all pets under ownership.

China has over 100 million registered pets in the country.

Delivering a measured approach

Qingdao officials appear prepared to take a tough stand to enforce its one-dog policy. Yes, it's a smart move to require dog owners to vaccinate their pets and to keep them under control when walking them outside.

But the one-dog policy could breed some discontent in the city. Some are arguing that it is not the number of dogs kept by one family really matters, regulating and educating the behavior of owners would play a more important role.