

Frequently Asked Questions on Tambucho-Killing of Unclaimed Stray Dogs

1. Why are we against tambucho-killing?

Cruelty. No veterinary organization in the world, no veterinarian can deny that killing an animal by putting it in a box and filling it up with exhaust fumes from a vehicle is cruel. Veterinarians who voted YES to tambucho have often attempted to hide this cruelty by saying that it is the “carbon monoxide” gassing that is allowed in some states in the United States, but this is not true. The US states that allow gassing use carbon monoxide in cylinders. Carbon monoxide in its purest form is a colorless, odorless gas. In the Philippines, carbon monoxide cylinders are currently not available.* The gassing that is being done in the Philippines is not carbon monoxide gassing but gassing via vehicle exhaust fumes. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) which is often quoted by vets voting for tambucho, has never agreed or conditionally agreed to gassing via vehicle exhaust fumes. NO veterinary association anywhere else in the world has conditionally agreed to gassing via vehicle exhaust fumes.

**in the interim, animal welfare groups CARA, AKF and PAWS are holding exploratory talks with a chemical engineer on how carbon monoxide in cylinders can be sourced for the specific use of euthanizing animals, while also trying to find veterinarians and veterinary groups dedicated to helping them lobby for making EUTHAL – the euthanizing drug- more available and more affordable.*

2. When you vote to delete tambucho-killing, does this mean that other options are no longer made available to LGU vets in far-flung provinces who have no access to the drug?

No. There are other methods prescribed in the AO10 – with the preferred method being the injection of barbiturates as the number 1 recommendation.

Deletion of tambucho is being opposed because it is not a humane form of killing and therefore should not be under the “Rules on Euthanasia” under the “Animal Welfare Act”

Euthanasia means a “good death”. Dying via suffocation while fully conscious is not a humane death.

3. Some vet groups propose gassing via tambucho after the animals have been sedated. Will this make tambucho-killing okay?

To sedate an animal, there needs to be a licensed vet injecting a sedative. This double-step of sedating and then putting into the gas chamber is self-defeating in terms of:

- Manpower involved (Veterinarian + 2 or more persons hauling dog into the chamber, revving up engine, checking the safety of gas chamber). Conversely, an animal handler and a licensed veterinarian can do the euthanasia via injection of EUTHAL
- Drugs used (sedative will still be used and the cost that could have gone into the purchase of a sedative could have easily just gone into the purchase of EUTHAL)

4. Is the drug available?

The drug was made available and the company that imported the drug last year was faced with a lot of expiring drugs because there was not much demand for it.

The reason? Per our current AO 13 under the Animal Welfare Act, which is still in force, tambucho-killing (Carbon monoxide gassing) is still legal. Why would the LGU vets insist on using a much more expensive drug if they were still being allowed to kill unclaimed stray dogs through the much cheaper (but obviously, cruel) way of putting the dogs in a box and suffocating them by pumping exhaust fumes coming from vehicle engines?

5. What is an S2 license? We have often heard vets say that this is needed in order to handle euthanasia drugs. Is it difficult to get an S2 license?

An S2 license is a license that is secured from the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency or PDEA by physicians, dentists, veterinarians, among other professions that use and handle dangerous drugs or controlled chemicals listed under RA 9165. (among these dangerous drugs is the euthanasia drug used by veterinarians on animals).

PDEA has outlined steps on how to secure an S2 license on their website and it is fairly simple for a professional with documents (ITR, license, etc). Some vets are able to secure their S2 license within an hour. PDEA has regional offices and it is fairly routine for an licensed medical professional to be getting or renewing this type of license yearly.

6. What is the role of a responsible veterinarian in the midst of the tambucho-issue?

The issue of having to resort to tambucho-killing opens the eyes of many vets to the problem of what really is euthanasia or humane killing. For many years, problems about availability of the drug arose only because there were not many vets lobbying for the drug to be made available at low-cost. For decades, vets in the Philippines have sourced euthanasia drugs in the black market. Now is the time for vet groups to step up to the plate and ensure that there is a demand for suppliers to be motivated to bring the costs down and import it into the Philippines.