

Hong Kong uses microchips to ID 20 police dogs

HONG KONG (Reuter) Twenty police dogs in Hong Kong have been fitted with microchips as part of a plan to do the same to all dogs in the territory to help locate owners, a government specialist said Saturday.

The microchip, about the size of a grain of rice, is inserted beneath the loose skin of the dog in a process as simple as an injection, said Liu Kwei-kin, senior veterinary officer at the Agriculture and Fisheries Department.

The electronic device is also meant to help stop the spread of rabies and can only be read with a scanner held close to the skin of the dog. A separate computer data base is set up to hold information on all dogs carrying microchips and their owners.

"The system, when introduced, will enable the department to quickly identify the dog owner," Liu said.

There were 140,000 registered dogs in the territory and 18,000 strays, Gordon Sui, Secretary for Economic Services estimated early this year following a fatal mauling of a 9-year-old girl.

Dog owners can be fined if their animals stray, attack or harass passers-by.

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