

Taipei abandons plan to let companies kill stray dogs

TAIPEI (AP) Bowing to protests from religious groups, Taipei City Hall has abandoned plans to let private businesses kill an estimated 200,000 stray dogs plaguing the capital.

But city dog-catchers will continue rounding up the animals and poisoning them if they are not claimed within three days, said Hsu Hai-hsiang, an official of the Bureau of Environmental Protection.

Under pressure to curb the spread of stray dogs which bite people, snarl traffic and spread disease, the municipality proposed to pay private entrepreneurs NT\$300 (\$11.30) for each dog killed.

But the idea was shelved after Christian and Buddhist

groups protested that it is cruel and will diminish respect for living creatures.

"We dropped the plan also because of concern that people would just catch any dogs, not just the strays, for the reward," Hsu said.

He said the city of 3 million has only two dog-catching vans which round up about 6,000 dogs a year. "But we are seeing more stray dogs because people keep abandoning them," Hsu said in an interview.