

May, 2021

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China's Donkey Consumption Faces World Supply Shortage

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2020213339

Over 100 donkeys are eaten every day and 52560 donkeys a year in Baoding, a city in Hebei Province, China.

With its donkey population falling because of high demand, China has resorted to importing them from abroad, threatening donkey populations in Africa.

Donkey Burger in Baoding

“Not a single donkey can walk out of Baoding alive.” People in my hometown Baoding, Hebei Province humorously express their passion for **Donkey Burgers**, which locals call “**lürrou huoshao**(驴肉火烧)”.

“

Not a single donkey can walk out of Baoding alive.

-Baoding Slang

Chopped or shredded donkey meat or offal is placed within a huoshao, a roasted, semi-flaky bread pocket, and eaten as a snack or as part of a meal.

Donkey Burgers are quite popular not only in Hebei Province but in northern China.

Appetite preference reflects on the economy. Over 1300 Donkey Burger restaurants are active in Baoding, a middle-level city 150 kilometers away from Beijing with 9.24 million people.

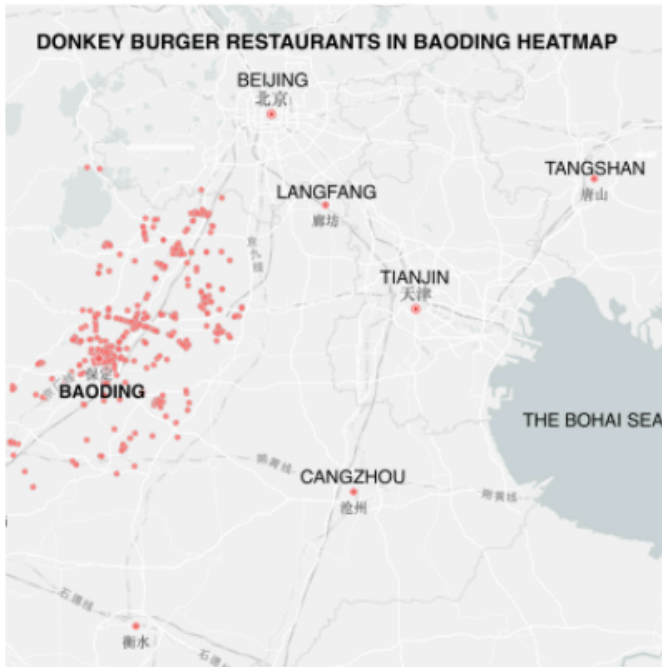
Based on an average estimated number of 200 donkey burgers a day per store can sell and 12 burgers one catty of donkey meat can hold, we can take per adult donkey's 150 catty cooked meat capacity into consideration, which leads us to the assessment that **144 donkeys** are eaten every day and **52560 donkeys** a year in Baoding.



Baoding's donkey consumption is a microcosm of the entirety.

Donkey Economy

Baoding can make about \$400,000 per day on donkey burgers based on all the burger restaurants.



China's donkey consumption is not only meat but nearly all parts of the animal. The country's love of donkey meat and skin/bones, which are used in traditional medicine for blood loss, dizziness, and insomnia with hundreds of dollars per pound, is demanding more supply.

Chinese Donkey Market

Donkey Bone 驴骨

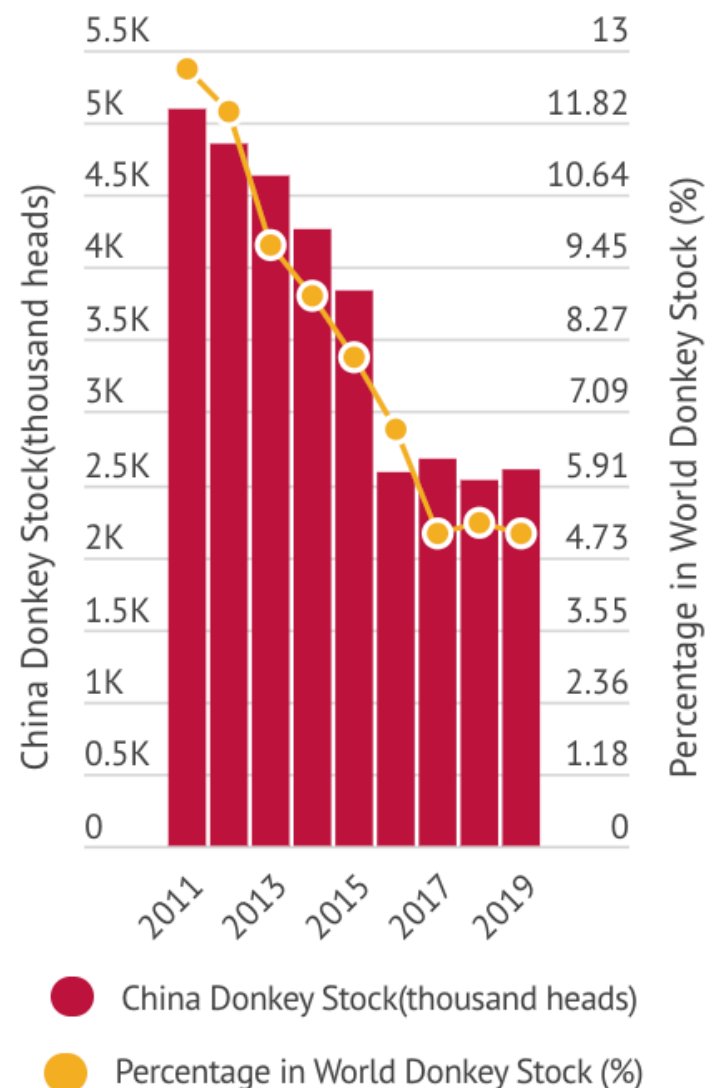
Donkey Skin 驴皮

ejiao 阿胶

Donkey Burger 驴肉火烧

Donkey Meat 驴肉

According to the monitoring data of the China Donkey Network, the number of donkeys slaughtered in China in 2020 is 330,000 heads, an increase of 30,000 heads from 2019, a year-on-year increase of 10%. The production of high-quality fresh donkey meat is less than 40,000 tons, **which can only provide about 1/3 of the market demand**, which is far from meeting the market demand.

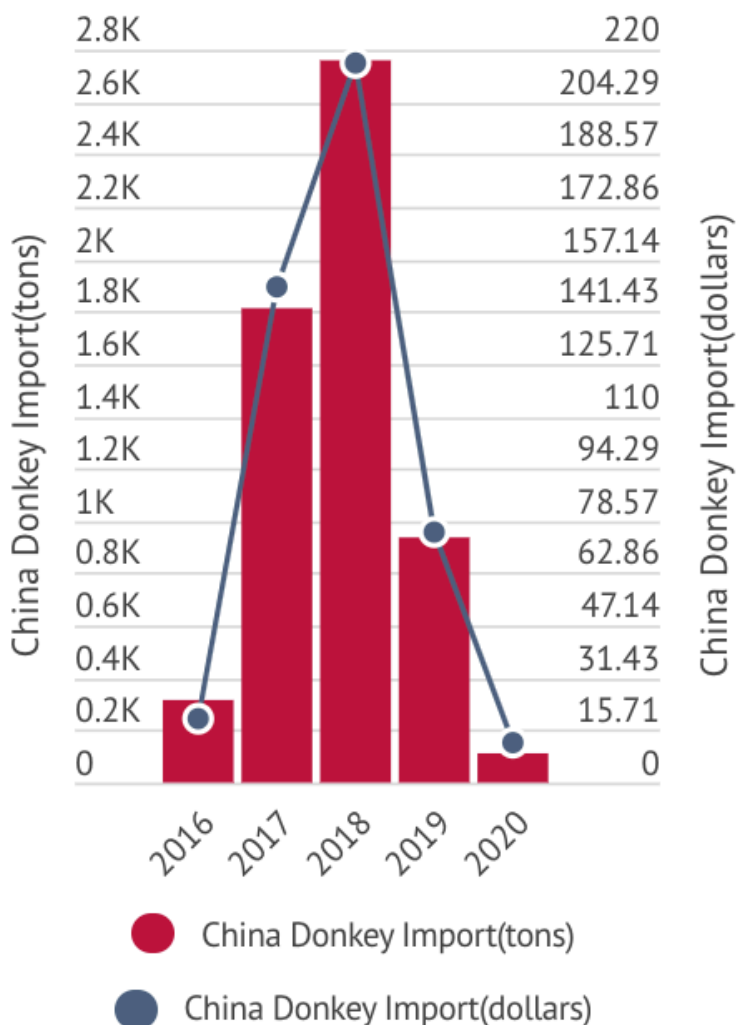


China's Demand and Africa Donkey Crisis

With its donkey population falling because of high demand, China has resorted to importing them from abroad. Africa used to be the main area to export donkeys to China.

After countries including Uganda, Tanzania, Botswana, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Senegal banned China from buying their donkey products, China reduced the import tax from 5% to 2% on donkey skins in 2017.

From 2016 to 2018, China's donkey imports continued to increase and then fell sharply. In 2020, China's donkey imports were 113.6 tons, a decrease of 820.9 tons from 2019; the import amount was US\$121,000, a decrease of US\$633,000 from 2019, mainly from Kyrgyzstan.



Kenya bans commercial slaughter of donkeys since March 2020. The East African nation legalized trade in donkey meat and hide in 2012 to meet growing demand in China. Minister Peter Munya said the decision had been a mistake as it had caused the donkey population to fall.

There are only an estimated 44 million donkeys left around the world according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

Seeking for new suppliers

In 2020, China mainly imported donkeys from Kyrgyzstan.

Pakistan spent 10 million dollars to implement the "Sustainable Donkey Development Plan" to promote the development of the donkey industry and provide China with a steady stream of live donkeys. And China government has policies to promote donkey aquaculture.

Data sources:

驴联网China Donkey Network <http://lvjyw.com>

高德地图amap <https://www.amap.com>

中国国家统计局China National Bureau

Statistics<http://www.stats.gov.cn>

中国海关总署General Administration of Customs
<http://www.customs.gov.cn>

Data tools: Excel, Amap, Python, Infogram

