

People have asked me for an English translation for the newspaper article from July 22 in 2015, so here it is:

These dogs are my family

(written by Lo van der Wal)

Pedigree dogs have a good life in Thailand. They are kept as pets and their owners see to it that they get food and drink. This is different for the street dogs. These bastard dogs live out on the streets and occasionally they get something to eat or drink, but most of the time they need to try to find their own. If it rains they get soaking wet if they have not found a shelter. If there is no shelter for the sun they get parched.

Bob and Lek Cornelissen from Apeldoorn know of their own accord there are much worse things which happen to these Thai street dogs. If they get sick there is nobody looking after them. They are suffering by the side of the street and everybody looks away. Lek, who was born in Thailand, saw how a taxi ran over a dog who was suckling her pups on the street. Most pups were dead. This case and many other heart wrenching cases, such as a drunk man beating the dogs with a stick, made her decide to take action and give these street dogs a worthy existence. "I just cannot look at this happening". Bob: "Her first dog was a pup with an enormous neck wound. The head was nearly severed. Lek took him in and cared for him."

Also several diseases occur with the street dogs under the care of Bob and Lek. One of the severe ones is Canine TVT or CTVT for short. This is a form of cancer which spreads like a venereal disease. This cancer leads to severe swellings in the reproductive organs, and it takes a long and expensive treatment.

Bob and foremost Lek have taken on a massive undertaking by helping these dogs from Nonthaburi. Lek has only recently returned to Apeldoorn, after three long periods in Thailand. Bob remarks: "You run into problems everywhere. At that point you can do two things: try to solve the issues or let the dogs die."

Bob and Lek Cornelissen do not spare cost or effort to give these dogs a better life.

Page 2, the bottom part (which is continuation of the article on first page):

Problem Solving can often only be done with money. Bob estimates that in the last year he has spent over 50 thousand Euro out of own pocket. Cornelissen: "There are certain running costs, such as food for the dogs. But there are also medical costs, the people who help need to be paid, also construction and rebuilding of shelters for the dogs. And if you want to transport a lot of dogs we will have to use a special dog transport service."

Also now Lek is in Apeldoorn, she is very involved in the shelter. Multiple times per day she calls Thailand. Sometimes it's for things specific to the dogs and other times it is to talk to the single staff member who has to do all on his own and who needs somebody to talk with. Yet there is no thought in her mind to leave the dogs to faith. "I cannot do that", she says, "Those dogs are my family".

Page 2, the top part and article.

Apeldoorn couple wants to improve situation and looks for donors to pay for everything.

Sanctuary for Thai dogs.

Lek's House Of Tails offers care to the disregarded, but 1 caretaker is not enough.

Bob and Lek live in Apeldoorn, but also have a house in Nonthaburi, a big city near Bangkok. They are going there once a year. Their neighborhood where they live and where Lek grew up used to be blessed with a lot of green. There were marshes with a few people living there, but also a lot of different animals, among which about 60 dogs.

Two years ago when a project developer set its eyes on this area everything changed. The green areas gave way to a shopping mall and housing. The original occupants, whose (illegal) houses were torn down took their belongings and left, leaving behind those dogs who had been living around them and leaving them to their own accord. The dogs did not fit in the new future for the area. They were chased away and they could only find partial refuge in a small street which is so narrow that a car can just about pass through. The dogs were having a hard life. Not only was there a big chance of getting hit by a car, but they also had little to eat and diseases struck and they were covered in ticks.

Bob and Lek decided to remove the dogs from there and move them up country about 90 kilometers away. Lek's father lives there on a patch of land with more space for the dogs to walk around. Bob: "We have been working there on fencing and the dogs got food and drink and blankets, they were vaccinated and ticks were removed daily and also some dogs were sterilized."

Lek's House Of Tails, a name given to a sanctuary where the outcasts of Nonthaburi were getting a better life. The idyll did not last long. 7 months ago Bob and Lek decided to move the sanctuary with the dogs, after severe threats by people nearby, of which Bob does not want to talk about. A new location, near a nation park, was eventually found in the much further province of Kanchanaburi, which is the same province as the world famous 'Bridge of the river Kwai'. On this hot location of about 300 square meters they had a pond dug out and a roof on poles built to at least provide the dogs a little shade. A small part was fenced. For a complete fence they currently lack the funds.

There is also a person who currently looks after the dogs, currently about 50. One caretaker is not really enough. The big wish for Bob and Lek is to find a second caretaker for the dogs. Also fencing in the whole compound, thereby giving the dogs more space is on their wish list, as also expansion of the medical program and planting trees for more shade. This however takes money. Lot of money. Through the website LeksHouseOfTails.azurewebsites.net they do receive support from people worldwide, but the 2 thousand donated so far is not enough to cover the costs. How they are going to cope financially? Bob: "Either we win the lottery, or we have to rob a bank, but we would need somebody who can run very fast. But seriously we are looking for donors. For 15 Euro per month we can feed a dog."