

South Korean customs deploy six cloned sniffer dogs

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South Korean customs officials handle cloned sniffer dogs checking baggage at Incheon International Airport. South Korea says six out of seven puppies cloned from a Canadian-born sniffer dog in late 2007 reported for duty on the day after completing their 16-month training in a unique kanine deployment.

South Korea customs has deployed what it claims to be the world's first cloned working sniffer dogs, officials said Sunday.

Six out of seven puppies, cloned from a Canadian-born sniffer dog in late 2007, reported for duty after completing their 16-month training on Friday, the Korea Customs Service said.

The six, each called "TOPPY" referring to "Tomorrow's Puppy," had successfully gone through their training, but one had to drop out due to an injury, according to the service.

"They are the world's first cloned sniffer dogs deployed at work," Park Jeong-Heon, a customs spokesman at Incheon International Airport, told AFP.

"They showed better performances in detecting illegal drugs during the training than other naturally-born sniffer dogs that we have."

Three cloned sniffer dogs reported for duty at Incheon International Airport, the country's largest airport, and one each in three customs offices in the cities of Incheon, Gimpo and Daegu, he added.

The customs authorities said they secured the clones by reproducing a "superb" Canadian sniffer Labrador Retriever dog, called Chaser.

The 300-million-won (238,000-dollar) project was carried out by Lee Byung-Chun who played a major role in the world's first successful [cloning](#) of a dog, which was made by creating a duplicate of a three-year-old Afghan Hound.

Lee was a former colleague of South Korea's disgraced [cloning](#) scientist Hwang Woo-Suk. But Lee severed ties with Hwang who was indicted for fraud, ethical breaches, embezzlement and other charges in 2006.

Hwang claims that he created the first human [stem cells](#), but that was ruled to be fake in January 2007.

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