

Fax to Sue Arnold

from Oliver ARK

Dear Sue,

I will try to answer your questions as best I can.

1. About myself and ARK.

I came to Japan in 1969 and worked as a lecturer of English at a university. (I still have the same job now) Over the years I have seen animals wandering loose on country roads and in the city. At first I assumed they belonged to somebody but gradually I realized they were strays. I used to pick up some of them and keep them a while trying to find their owner. In the end I took them to the Japan Animal Welfare Society's Rescue Centre located in Nishinomiya near Kobe. I imagined that JAWS operated in a similar way to other welfare organizations abroad, that the animals would be taken in and well-looked after until suitable homes could be found for them. Of course I realised that those which couldn't find homes would eventually be put to sleep. Gradually it dawned on me that although the animals were loved and well-cared for, their stay at the Centre was extremely short and that almost no effort at all was made to rehome them. The numbers passing through this small Centre is around 10,000/ year and with only 2 people running it, it is hardly surprising they have no time to look for suitable homes. The attitude of JAWS in general is that the situation is so overwhelming that they have no other option than to rescue and put down. I have nothing but admiration for the couple that run the Centre who have to continue this heart-breaking work but I do wonder why JAWS doesn't do more to get to grips with the key issues i.e. lack of laws, people's opposition to and ignorance of neutering and lack of education in the proper care of animals. All this made me decide to found ARK. to find out for myself what the problems were and to try to solve them. The place where I was living before didn't have the space for me to keep many animals, which meant I had to always transport them to the Centre knowing what their fate would be. I felt with a little more time and effort on my part I could find them homes. I searched for some suitable land and moved to the present site 4 years ago. ARK was founded in 1990. At first it was assumed I would become a branch of JAWS, especially as they generously helped finance the main kennel building and the new office. But from both our viewpoints it seemed better that I become independent although I work closely with some JAWS groups in the Kansai and I send reports to London JAWS. I also try to keep contact with as many animal groups throughout Japan as possible, even though I know that many are bitterly opposed to others. This is one of the

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