

...y blackmailed the 46-year-old company employee in Kamifukuoka on Sept. 10. He transfer 100,000 yen into an account registered under a false name, police added. place, the officials said. The money was kept in different sections of the prefecture. He said some of the misappropriated money was used to buy snacks when off-

Life hangs in the balance for 150 dogs rescued from house

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Asahi Evening News

ITO, Shizuoka Prefecture—The adage that it's a dog's life couldn't be more true for 150 canines that were rescued from a house last month because the owner hadn't given them anti-rabies shots.

But their problems are far from over. The dogs may be put to sleep as strays unless new owners are found for them by Friday.

The owner of the dogs was arrested Oct. 21, following years of complaints by neighbors about the awful conditions in which the animals were kept. The law requires that all dogs be given an anti-rabies shot each year. Even so, it is highly unusual for someone to be arrested for violating the law.

Volunteers and local health center officials have been desperately trying to find foster homes for animals, and were successful in 96 cases. But there is precious time remaining for the 150 remaining dogs. The 62-year-old woman had 250 canines in her care when authorities came to the rescue.

According to Atami Public Health Center, the woman moved into her house in 1988 with eight dogs. The property was 900 square meters in size with a building once used as a guesthouse. She soon began picking up strays and the number of dogs began to soar as they bred.

Residents had complained since she moved in about the loud barking. Things got out of hand when the smell became intolerable. Authorities discovered that the woman did nothing about dog droppings. They

said the floor of her home was once covered in 10 centimeters of excrement.

Sources said the woman was deeply in debt, having mismanaged her business during the late 1980s asset-inflated economy.

The property had been under court seizure. Residents complained that the woman kept the mongrels to avoid eviction.

The health center finally filed a criminal accusation against the woman last month. That led to her arrest. She is still being held by the local public prosecutors office.

Despite the owner's negligence, the dogs were in relatively good health. A local couple, a gardener and his wife, had taken great pains to look after the animals. The couple was originally hired to look after her dogs, but it quickly emerged

support of fellow volunteers, he retrains them, nurses sick ones back to health and hands them over to new owners.

Kitaura arrived at Ito a day after he saw a TV report about the arrest of the dog owner.

"The only problem with those dogs are that they have never been leashed or collared in their life," Kitaura said. Otherwise, Kitaura said most of the dogs are basically good-natured, and craving for love.

It only took a few days for the dogs to get used to leash and collar, Kitaura said. He said the prefectural government and the health center had no idea about how to treat dogs. Kitaura brought collars and leash from Yokohama at his expense. Kitaura travels back and forth between Ito and his home each day, training and taming dogs with two local volunteers. Ki-

taura has also paid for veterinarians to remove their ability to breed handing them to new owners.

People have come from Ito as well as Kanagawa and Tokyo prefectures in the hope of acquiring the dogs. One person traveled all the way from Kyoto. As of this morning, 96 had found new homes.

"If we are allowed a few more weeks, I am certain that all the dogs will be able to find new homes instead of being gassed to death," Kitaura said. He has asked the prefectural government to grant a stay of execution.

The health center previously announced it planned a cutoff date on Friday. Health center official Hirofumi Namba told Asahi Evening News the future of the dogs had not been decided.

in tax money for various purposes.