

Man with 700 dogs is seeking help for abandoned animals

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Tadashi Honda has 700 dogs _ and doesn't want any more.

For 10 years, he has collected abandoned dogs from the streets around his home in Yokaichiba, Chiba Prefecture, and other places.

Honda, 47, is now launching a campaign to get other people to help out.

“One day, I saw a boy who was holding a puppy. He said he had other puppies but since he couldn't take care of them all, he took the rest to a public health office,” he said. “It seemed that the boy didn't mind if the rest of the puppies were destroyed.”

For many people, Honda said, abandoning a dog is merely a matter of convenience, noting that people tend to leave their dogs behind when they move.

“Stray dogs are often hit by cars,” he said. “When I'm driving, I sometimes see injured dogs lying on the road. It seems that very few people pay attention to them. These stray dogs would be picked up by public health officers and be destroyed or sent to a laboratory for animal experiments.”

Honda said he usually takes them home and has a veterinarian friend tend to them.

A decade ago, he only had a few dogs and cats, but the numbers soared as he grew more and more concerned with the plight of homeless dogs.

He eventually had to quit his job as a salesman to care for the animals. He covers expenses with contributions from friends and relatives.

Honda keeps his dogs in a specially built hut on a 661-sq.-meter lot adjacent to his house.

Every morning and evening, he and three volunteers take the dogs in two vans to a field about five minutes from his house for three hours of exercise. With so many dogs, he is required to make 10 trips every morning and evening.

Honda tries to find new owners for the dogs, but he is very particular and checks their intentions closely to make sure they will take care of the animals.

He is now in debt because dog food bills are running 700,000 a month.

He launched his campaign last month to urge local governments to pass stronger measures against people who abandon their pets.

He also wants authorities to enforce a law against abandoning dogs.