

Pet exchange copes with population explosion

TOKUSHIMA (Kyodo) People with unwanted pets come to Tokushima's Shinmachibashi Park every third Sunday.

Other people stop by to pick out the pets of their choice.

Most of the animals brought to the pet exchange are two- to three-month old kittens and puppies, but occasionally hamsters or birds show up.

The Society to Find Homes for Unwanted Pets invented the system to find "foster parents" for unwanted pets, but lately people who give away their pets outnumber those wanting them.

The association of local residents is appealing to pet owners to have their pets sterilized if they are unable to keep the offspring.

The group began its activities in 1988, when it received 259 dogs and cats.

The number nearly quadrupled to 1,006 last year. But 571 pets went unadopted last year compared with 150 in 1988.

The unbalance stems from the fact that most people who come to the meetings for pets want to keep just one pet, while those who bring the pets try to get rid of a whole litter, a society spokesman said.

Tadashige Nakagawa, veterinarian and advisor to the group, has called on owners to have their pets sterilized if



PROSPECTIVE OWNERS decide on which pup to take home at a pet-exchange held in a Tokushima park. Some residents are concerned by the fact there are more pets needing homes than there are people willing to take them in. KYODO PHOTO

they cannot keep litters born to them.

Kensuke Chikamori, associate professor at Naruto University of Teacher Education and the group's chairman, adds that though the idea may sound cruel, "it cannot be helped as a last resort if financial and spatial situations

do not allow more pets in the house."

Chikamori envisions a society where people and pets can live in mutual respect for each other.

"If only people could see that all life on Earth has the same value," he said.

The society may be contact-

ed at 12, Suitohoncho 2-chome, Tokushima. the telephone number is (0886) 53-8530.

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