

Pets being hit by recession: welfare group

LONDON (Reuter-Kyodo) British pets are being starved, abandoned and neglected because their recession-hit owners cannot afford to look after them, an animal welfare organization said Wednesday.

Recession-related neglect has increased greatly, with typical cases including a dog found starved to death after its owner fell behind with the rent and fled, the Royal Society for the Protection of Animals said.

"The RSPCA gets calls dai-

ly reporting animals left behind when homes have been repossessed or owners have been forced to go into bed-and-breakfast accommodation, but there is no excuse for this callous cruelty," said campaigns director Jerry Lloyd.

Branches of the RSPCA around Britain have also reported a big increase in calls for assistance with bills from veterinary surgeons or pet food.

In 1991, the RSPCA

destroyed 93,000 pets and found new homes for more than 95,000. The economic downturn means people are less willing to take on the financial burden of a pet, the society said.

It urged people to "think long and hard" before buying a pet for Christmas, and said those who wish to go ahead should wait until after the festive season when they can purchase a "recession victim" from one of the society's homes.