

Farmer fined for letting poultry die

A farmer who deserted his poultry business, leaving most of his 19,000 chickens to die of starvation, has been released from 11 days of detention after paying a small fine, police said.

Police in Tottori Prefecture said the 44-year-old man, arrested Feb. 2 and charged with violating the animal protection law, went free Feb. 12 after paying a maximum ¥30,000 fine.

They said the farmer deserted his chicken farm because he could not afford poultry feed with a drop in egg prices.

About 17,000 chickens died after weeks without food and water. The surviving 2,000 were moved to a prefectural poultry research center, but another 1,250 died.

Government officials in Tokyo responsible for enforcing the animal protection law said it was only the first or second time it has been applied successfully in recent years.

Local officials said animal lovers across Japan donated ¥260,000 to feed the surviving chickens.