

Ministry to scrap dog registration rules

The Ministry of Health and Welfare will drop a legal requirement that dog owners annually register their dogs with prefectural governments, ministry officials said Friday.

The requirement has been in place to ensure that dogs be given annual inoculations against rabies. Owners customarily have their animals vaccinated when they register them each April.

The preventive effects of the shot last for only one year.

The ministry will submit to the Diet an amendment to soften the current Rabies

Prevention Act, which mandates annual registration, they said. The amendment, if passed by the Diet by the end of fiscal 1994, would go into effect at the beginning of April.

In Tokyo, the amendment would release dog owners from a legal obligation to pay an annual fee of ¥2,580 for registration and a tag, the officials said.

However, the ministry will keep in place the legal re-

quirement to have a domesticated dog given an annual rabies inoculation in view of the limited durability of its effect, they said.

The number of domesticated dogs in Japan is estimated at 7.5 million, though the number of registered dogs stands at only 4.11 million, meaning more than 3 million dogs are unaccounted for. A human victim of rabies has not been reported since 1957.

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