

loyal friends but also provide valuable education in responsibility and care. Housing is a key factor in pet abandonment.

3. Lack of laws and an inefficient registration system.

The present (1973) law for protection of animals is designed to protect people from animals. It is virtually unknown even to the police and there is no way to enforce it because there are no animal welfare inspectors. Even if a person can be prosecuted and convicted of cruelty and neglect, the fine is a paltry ¥30,000-no deterrent whatsoever. (In the United Kingdom where the first animal protection law was enacted in 1822, there are over 300 inspectors with powers to follow up cases of neglect and cruelty and to prosecute where necessary. Penalties range from upto ¥450,000 in fines or upto six months in prison. In 1990 for example, 2,608 people were convicted, 53 sent to prison, and 856 disqualified from owning an animal.)

The present registration system ignored by many dog owners because of its expense, involves a lot of time and money to administer since each dog receives a new number tag every year. This can easily drop off and get

lost. ARK is lobbying for a more efficient computerized registration system where a microchip is implanted under the skin of the animal. The chip remains in place permanently and can be checked by a scanner without anyone having to touch the animal. When an animal is lost the owner could easily be traced. Likewise when an animal is abandoned the culprit could be traced and prosecuted.

4. Dogs and Cats causing a nuisance.

When people complain about an animal they should really be complaining about the owner. Many people telephone or come to ARK with 'animal' problems. In nearly all cases it the people who are the problem not the animal.

Many of the problems are stress-related. These problems are avoidable if we consider how animals think and what their needs are. Remember that you are the centre of your pet's life, its total world. In order to handle and care animals we have to first understand them.

In my next article I will deal with the pleasures and problems of owning a pet.