

Guidelines of Ornamental Aquatic Animal* Disease Surveillance Programme

Background

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has launched the Ornamental Aquatic Animal Disease Surveillance Programme which aims at assisting traders to export ornamental fish to the European Union, the United States, Australia, Japan and other countries requiring an additional official animal health certificate.

Local ornamental fish farms must meet the following infrastructural and management criteria before joining the programme and applying for official animal health certificate from AFCD.

Infrastructure

- 1) Registered fish farms shall consist of a primary enclosure, a kind of structure for keeping ornamental fish to a confined space, in structurally sound condition to prevent disturbance and injury caused by outside animals;
- 2) Disinfectant facilities shall be installed outside the primary enclosure;
- 3) Fish holding tanks or pools shall be strongly built with their surfaces easily cleaned and equipped with drainage facilities;
- 4) The floor surface of the fish farms shall be waterproof and easy to clean to avoid puddles of waste water;
- 5) Suitable drainage facilities shall be provided to drain away waste water;
- 6) Water for keeping ornamental fish must originate from a clean and uncontaminated source, e.g. drinking water;
- 7) Isolation and quarantine facilities shall be provided for isolating/treating sick fish;
- 8) Water, perishable goods etc. from the isolation facilities must not be used in other tanks without disinfection or treatment.

- 9) If both goldfish and tropical fish are being kept in the farm, they must be kept in different compartments of the premises.
- 10) The packing premises shall be a roofed and enclosed structure to prevent contamination from outside sources. Ultraviolet lamps or other disinfection facilities shall also be provided for disinfection of packing water;
- 11) Other facilities including storage for packing materials and disinfectants shall also be provided;
- 12) A sketch layout of the fish holding facilities shall be submitted to AFCD. If fish holding facilities are to be modified, prior approval must be sought from AFCD.

Management Criteria

- 1) Fish farms must be conducted fish health inspections and water quality checks by AFCD for a period of not less than 2 years. The inspections consist of an annual virological and pathological test and an additional virological test at least 3 months apart and not more than 6 months from the annual test or as advised by veterinary officer of AFCD. The tests on OIE notifiable diseases shall be conducted according to the OIE code and Manual. The fish farms must pass all tests before joining the programme. Regular checks shall also be conducted thereafter according to the same schedule as above.
- 2) All ornamental fish imported/exported must be healthy and free from any clinical signs of disease. Each consignment should be covered by an animal health certificate issued in the place of origin;
- 3) Stock-in and stock-out records should be established to ensure that all fish are supplied by reputed and uninfected farms. A balance on the number of fish in stock must be kept on farm for readily inspection by AFCD officers;
- 4) Daily operation records should be established to ensure proper running of the farms. A brief pamphlet on diseases in fish easily available at the farm;

- 5) A quarantine system for newly acquired fish should be put in place to ensure that the fish exported are healthy. Water must not be linked to other facilities within the farm for keeping of other fish. Culture water and perishable goods must be disinfected or treated if being reused;
- 6) Disinfect fish farms regularly. Sick fish shall be isolated/treated when necessary, as in accordance to the instructions from a private veterinarian, and the veterinary drug used must be reported to AFCD immediately;
- 7) For non-breeding farm, “all-in all-out rule” must be strictly followed;
- 8) Dead fish shall be cleared up properly on a daily basis. Immediate report must be made to AFCD if there is any abnormal mortalities and/or fish diseases ;
- 9) AFCD officers will visit the ornamental fish farms regularly, during which relevant operation and inventory records shall be produced for their inspection;
- 10) Quarantine facilities shall be restricted to authorised personnel only. No entry shall be allowed for unauthorised persons;
- 11) Food fish or fish not under the surveillance programme shall not be kept in the fish holding tanks.

Notes for Exporters

- 1) AFCD may issue official animal health certificates to the ornamental fish exporters, who must make their applications at least 10 working days before the expected date of examination and pay all the fees required;
- 2) Exporters must check and ensure in advance that they satisfy all import requirements of the destination countries/places. Should there be any additional health certificate conditions to be added, application must be made at least 20 working days before the expected date of examination for AFCD’s consideration;
- 3) Exporters must submit the original invoice, packing list and declaration together with the consignment to AFCD for approval;

- 4) Generally, an official animal health certificate is valid for 10 days from the date of issue, or a period decided by the destination country/place;
- 5) If an endangered species is involved, the Permit and Certification Section will only accept the application if a certificate for exporting endangered species has been obtained;
- 6) Each consignment must be delivered to the AFCD Headquarters 15 minutes before the scheduled appointment for registration and inspection unless otherwise approved by AFCD. The exporters must submit the documents (mentioned in point 3 above) in original for registration. Inspection may have to be rearranged for late comers.
- 7) The packing water must be disinfected while the fish holding container must be unused or disinfected;
- 8) There must be only one kind of fish in each packing bag. Packing bags must be made of durable materials allowing easy viewing;
- 9) No drugs including antibiotics are allowed in any consignment without AFCD's approval;
- 10) No insects or other extraneous materials are allowed in any consignment except activated carbon or other attachments that are approved by AFCD;
- 11) The outside packaging must carry appropriate International Air Transport Association (IATA) labels which specify consignment details to facilitate inspection.
- 12) Animal Health Certificate may not be issued and the application fee shall be forfeited if abnormal fish health is found during the pre-export inspection. The fish may also be sent to the veterinary laboratory for further inspection and testing whenever necessary. The exporters shall bear all the cost so caused.

Enquiries

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* Exported ornamental fish usually refers to fresh water species including tropical freshwater fish, goldfish, koi, ornamental shrimps and ornamental amphibian. Any species which has not gone through inspection will not be issued an official animal health certificate.

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