

Code of Standards for Registered Ornamental Fish* Exporters

Background

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has launched a registered ornamental fish exporter system 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 they could be approved by AFCD as registered ornamental fish exporters.

Infrastructure

- 1) Registered fish farms shall consist of a primary enclosure, which means a structure used to restrict ornamental fish to a limited amount of space, in structurally sound condition to prevent disturbance and injury caused by outside animals;
- 2) Fish holding tanks or pools shall be strongly built with their surfaces easily cleaned and equipped with drainage facilities;
- 3) The floor surface of the fish farms shall be waterproof and easy to clean to avoid puddles of waste water;
- 4) Suitable drainage facilities shall be provided to drain away waste water;
- 5) Water for keeping ornamental fish must originate from a clean and uncontaminated source. Water must be potable otherwise the sterilization facilities is approved by AFCD;
- 6) Isolation and quarantine facilities shall be provided for isolating/treating sick fish. Water must not be linked to other facilities within the farm for keeping of other fish;

- 7) 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;
- 8) Other facilities including toilets and storage for packing materials and disinfectants shall also be provided;
- 9) A sketch layout of the fish holding facilities must be provided to AFCD. If fish holding facilities are to be modified, prior notification must be made to AFCD for seeking its approval.

Management Criteria

- 1) Fish farms must conduct fish health inspections and water quality checks for a period of not less than 2 years for exporting to US. For other importing countries such as EU countries they must pass at least one annual pathology test and one interim virology test before export (minimum one month interval between the two tests or the length of period as the veterinary officer may think fit). They must pass those tests before being approved by AFCD as registered ornamental fish exporters. Regular checks shall also be conducted thereafter. The pathology test will be conducted annually while virology test to be done in a half-year basis;
- 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;

- 6) Disinfect fish farms regularly. Sick fish shall be isolated/treated when necessary, as in accordance to the instructions from a private veterinarian;
- 7) Veterinary drug use in fish farms shall be reported to AFCD at the 6 monthly visits;
- 8) Dead fish shall be cleared up properly on a daily basis. Immediate report must be made to AFCD should there be any abnormal mortalities and/or fish diseases ;
- 9) AFCD staff will visit registered 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) No food fish shall be kept in the fish holding tanks.

Notes for Exporters

- 1) AFCD will issue official animal health certificates to registered 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) The veterinary inspection fee for a batch of over 100 fish is HK\$ 800. Certified copies of official animal health certificates will be issued at a cost of HK\$ 160 each;
- 3) Exporters must check and ensure in advance that they satisfy all import requirements of the designation 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 approval;
- 4) Exporters must submit the original invoice, packing list and declaration together with the consignment to AFCD for approval;
- 5) 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;

- 6) If an endangered species is involved, the Permit and Certification Unit will only accept the application if a certificate for exporting endangered species has been obtained;
- 7) Each consignment must be delivered to the AFCD Headquarters for inspection on the appointment date unless otherwise approved by AFCD. 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 are allowed in any consignment without a veterinarian's approval;
- 10) No insects are allowed in any consignment except activated carbon or other attachments;
- 11) The outside packaging must carry appropriate International Air Transport Association (IATA) labels which specify consignment details to facilitate inspection.

Enquiries

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

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