



ANNUAL REPORT

2011 - 2012

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DIRECTORS' REPORT

The weather and the economic climate have made this year very difficult indeed for trade. When times are so tough, every penny each of us spends must give a return to our business. As you read this Annual Report we hope you will agree that subscriptions and levies paid to OATA continue to benefit all our businesses.

If, on top of all the other challenges this year; the vets had control over sales of treatments; sturgeon sales had been banned (the Environment Agency have been pushing for this for years); there had been fewer oxygenator varieties for sale; the import of many tropical species (such as gourami) susceptible to Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome (EUS) had been subject to expensive controls; welfare groups had been given unfettered input to national standards for pet shop licensing; and adverse criticisms of the industry in Parliament had gone unanswered - how much worse things could have been. OATA continues to monitor and fight the trade's corner on all of these long-burning issues. Though some might be regarded as history, such issues rarely die gracefully, indeed some can rise up and bite back at most inconvenient times.

Current issues on OATA's agenda, all with potential to impact the industry in future, include delays at airports; charges for Animal Health, Plant Health, and CITES; a new EU Invasive Species Directive; a new EU Animal and Plant Health legislative regime; concerns about selective breeding, plastic bags, biocides ... issues that directly affect the range of animals, plants and dry goods we are allowed to sell, and under what conditions. While we are looking after our own businesses, could any of us on our own afford the extra time and money to individually intervene in all of these issues, and would governments take notice? This is what convinces us of OATA's value for money - our trade association lobbying effectively on our behalf, with the power of our collective voice.

We cannot be complacent and we will and do look for better results all the time, but resources are tight and legislation increasingly deflects energy from our other roles. Many of the groups OATA meets in negotiation spend more in just raising funds than it would cost to run our association for a century. We are small and will always by our very nature be small, but more income would certainly help. While we can't ask members to financially contribute significantly more, we do ask for your assistance in another way. Help us spread the load by getting more members.

The best advert is personal recommendation of a product of service. All we ask is that if you too believe that OATA provides a useful service to industry, tell everyone in the industry that you meet.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT



If I were asked to pick the biggest single threat to our industry it would not be the prospect of continued economic stagnation or another abysmal summer and not even the range of issues that confront OATA and the sector on a day to day basis.

Rather it would be the resources available to groups that oppose taking specimens from the wild and those more radical groups that oppose pet keeping to a greater or lesser extent. Of course pressure can be applied by these groups anywhere in the world and impact the animals you may sell. As examples of the resource available a group looking to ban marine exports from Hawaii employ sixty staff over half of whom are lawyers, another group petitioning in the US to alter the trade in coral reef species employ over 100 staff, closer to home in Europe Endcap a group of 50 organisations pushing to ban all wild animals have at least one member with tens of staff, Eurogroup for Animals count the RSPCA and 50 other groups as members have 14 full time staff in Brussels alone.

These groups have always been there and have always had more resource and manpower than trade associations. However I must warn that some of them are taking a deeper interest in the trade and the opportunities there are for problems to be converted to issues that can then be used for publicity campaigns.

The resources available to fight some of the more outrageous claims must be found but not surely from current members digging more deeply into their pockets. Rather it is time for those who have sat comfortably gaining the benefits of OATA's work (or any other trade association) without paying to support our work to contribute. Unfortunately I can already hear the oft spouted response "It never would've happened" tumbling off their lips. Maybe members could use this Annual Report to metaphorically beat some sense of reality into those businesses not yet members of OATA.

SOME OF OUR SUCCESSES IN 2012

This year OATA has saved in the region of £15 million of retail sales*

Issue	Outcome
The final bell has sounded and the industry has come out on top...	
<p>Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome - a disease listed by the EU in 2006. If it had been implemented a whole raft of tropical fish (gouramis and barbs for instance) would have had to be sourced from sites declared free of the disease. Worse, coldwater fish would have been caught up in the issues as they can carry the disease.</p>	<p>After six years of deferring the implementation the EU is taking EUS off its list of controlled diseases.</p> <p>OATA played an active role in achieving this outcome which probably saved the industry £ millions.</p>
<p>Wholesalers record keeping for veterinary medicines - wholesalers were required to keep extensive records concerning batch details and destinations for veterinary medicines. These were so onerous some wholesalers might not have been able to employ the staff to keep this information up to date -40,000 records at one site we visited.</p>	<p>The more onerous requirements to keep information in a specified form at the wholesalers premises were removed as long as the same information could be readily retrieved (from a manufacturer for instance).</p>
success in the early rounds...	
<p>Charges at Border Inspection Posts - Due to increase in October from approximately £6.60 to over £48 and then in April 2013 to over £73.70 for each of over 7000 import documents.</p>	<p>The October increase was deferred after heavy lobbying by OATA thus avoiding charges of over £140,000 for importers. OATA will continue to robustly fight the industry's corner.</p>
<p>Barley straw - in official terms its use to control algae means it's a biocide. As such the data requirements for registration would have been colossal.</p>	<p>Building on previous work by OATA and its members a concession has been reached that Barley Straw can be dealt with under the "Simplified Authorisation Procedure". Still too expensive - OATA will continue lobbying for a more common sense approach.</p>
<p>Invasives in Eire - a new law made it possible for Ministers at the stroke of a pen to ban the import sale and ownership of koi and a range of aquarium and pond plants. Relying on officials to assess in private unknown data could set a dangerous precedent across the rest of the EU as the text of a Directive on invasives is formulated.</p>	<p>Officials agreed that before any controls were implemented risk assessments would be carried out.</p>

*Taking into account previous successes such as ensuring the oxygenating plant *Lagarosiphon major*, fish treatments (which are off the retail shelves in some countries in the EC) and sterlets (which the Environment Agency have lobbied hard to remove from our sectors) remain on retail sale this year

FULL COST RECOVERY – THE DEATH OF INDUSTRY!!!!

“Full cost recovery” seems to be the mantra of every official service at the moment. There is a government imperative to recoup the costs of inspections and the like which it believes should not be funded by general taxation. It’s worth remembering that assuming the ornamental fish industry turns over £400 million pa it probably contributes £160 million in taxes in one form or another already.



In a meeting held in the House of Commons Chief Executive Keith Davenport commented to the then DEFRA Minister Lord Taylor that when the government had completed their full cost recovery programme there might be no industry left. He said “I hope you are joking!”. Keith simply replied “No, I am not.” Proposals made recently are summarised in the table below:

Charge	Original £	Interim £	Proposed final £ ** (total increase %)
CITES	5	59	67 (1340)
BIP*	6.60	74.23	116.18 (1174)
Plant Health	14.28	46.98	79.68 (558)

*based on cost of an average CVED at Heathrow

** subject to confirmation

The BIP charges alone would amount to an increase of over £500k per year to the industry. (Incidentally these charges are predicated on a vet costing £90 per hour or the equivalent of £175,000 pa two thirds of which is overheads.)

What is OATA doing? Very robustly challenging all increases unless they can be justified not just on a “cost recovery” basis but on a “a least cost efficiently delivered service with identified performance standards”. We are also pushing very hard to make government assess the cumulative impact of the range of charges proposed on a sector like ours instead of assessing them individually. The table above demonstrated each increase proposed is bad news but when combined they could have dire impacts for business. OATA has been included in stakeholder working groups to look at some of the issues raised.

Good news! (at least for now)

After carefully preparing a response on the consultation increased BIP charges were deferred for six months.

COMINGS AND GOINGS IN THE OATA OFFICE

In July Assistant Chief Executive Chris White left after just over two years in the OATA office. He left to take up a “hands on” research job – we wish him every success in the future. While in office Chris was responsible for a number of very successful projects such as the care sheets, fish keeping video’s and “Trouble shooting” App.

During the year Moira Blackledge covering PR arrived and left. She played a significant part in the development of the new website.

Recruitment for replacements for these posts is under way

OFFICIALS CAN FORGET THEIR OWN RULES TOO!

Other issues just re-emerge periodically as officials forget their own rules or new officials don't know them. A case this month was when an importer was asked by Customs for an IUU certificate before releasing a consignment of fish from an airport. IUU stands for Illegal Unreported and Unregulated and is applied to fisheries. At the start of 2010 the EU required wild caught fish to be accompanied by a document saying it had been caught legally. This was intended to cover the rather larger fisheries for food species but many consignments were snagged at the time. OATA intervened and it is now quite clear that ornamental fish are exempt from the requirement. We just have to occasionally help members remind officials of their own rules.



NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED

Earlier in November the new look OATA website was launched. The old web site (which was still attracting significant numbers of visitors from all over the world and from all sectors public, scientific and government officials) was written over ten years ago. With the passage of time and as bits and pieces were added to it this once award winning site was showing its age. The new site has made use of up to date programming and tools. This should make it easier for visitors to find what they want but will also enable us to enhance the "Members only" area.



BARLEY STRAW AND BIOCIDES - A SLEDGE HAMMER TO CRACK A NUT



In June this year the Drinking Water Inspectorate issued a document in which they stated "Barley straw, grown without the use of pesticides, herbicides and related products, may be used to control algal growth in raw (untreated) water reservoirs".

An unremarkable statement given man evolved consuming water from rivers and lakes in which organic materials similar to barley straw had broken down.

In September a new Biocides Regulation was introduced and this required the active ingredient to be identified and a variety of other information to be supplied if small pouches of barley straw were to be placed in garden ponds to control algae. The costs of undertaking this would be prohibitive. A lower level of information requirement is available but we were first told this could not be used to barley straw. After lobbying this has been reviewed and the simpler procedure will be available. However even this lowering of the bar may mean barley straw will have to be removed from the market as the costs will make it a commercial non starter.

This is not the first time this absurd situation has arisen. Between 2003 and 2006 OATA and a number of active members addressed just the same issues with the Health and Safety Executive (who implement the Biocides regulations in the UK), Ministers and the European Commission. At that time an official in the EC said in an email they thought the sledgehammer could be avoided until a new Regulation was introduced when they thought the problem would be avoided by wholly exempting barley straw from the Regulation.



ARE THERE SUCH THINGS AS LEVEL PLAYING FIELDS?



We always ask if we have a level playing when this or that happens. Any of you who have played sports will know the answer is no! The pitch almost always slopes a little and even if it doesn't there is always an unfortunately positioned divot (or even beach ball) to deflect the ball past your goalkeeper. So all too often it is unfortunately the case with the implementation of laws. In the UK just two examples we have investigated are outlined below.

ACROSS THE UK THE HIGHEST CHARGES FOR PET SHOP LICENCES ARE OVER 20 TIMES THE LOWEST

OATA chairs a group of trade association known as Propets. One of issues we are addressing is the inconsistency of pet shop licensing across the country. Knowing these occur and proving it are two different things. OATA managed a Propets exercise to gather the relevant information by asking questions of each local authority in the country using the Freedom of Information. By doing this regularly we will be able to demonstrate whether things are getting better or worse and for the first time have a fully evidenced case to ask for dramatic changes to the system to ensure there is a level playing field. Members all received a copy of the report produced as result of this exercise.



IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE YEAR YOU WERE APPROXIMATELY 17 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO HAVE AQUATIC PLANTS FROM SINGAPORE SEIZED FOR BEING INFECTED WITH TOBACCO WHITEFLY AT MANCHESTER THAN YOU WERE AT HEATHROW

And when you look at differences across Europe then.....



At Manchester you were almost 90 times, and at Heathrow 5 times, more likely to have your shipment intercepted than in the rest of the EU

Tobacco Whitefly (*Bemisia tabacci*) is found in many places around the world but not in the UK. It is found in Europe but this is a different strain to that found in the Far East. These whitefly can cause problems in two ways. Firstly they punch needle like holes in the plants to feed on sap which when they stop feeding continues to weep from the wound and is quickly covered by moulds and fungus which prevent photosynthesis.

Secondly and perhaps more importantly they carry viruses in their guts from other plants they have fed on. Some of these viruses could cause problems for major crops such as potatoes and tomatoes.

Continued from page 6;

That said we did have to ask very serious questions of the findings made at different European airports especially as the plants all had the necessary certificates from the authorities in Singapore. Inspections of plants imported from Singapore via Holland were found to be infected also. The problem seems to have resolved itself but quite why we will only know in the fullness of time - it could be changes in inspection procedures or staff or the exporting authorities being more carefully or...?

An after thought – do we need such tough controls anyway? Over the last couple of years authorities in the UK, Belgium and Holland have all been heavily criticised for their laxity of phyto-sanitary import inspections by the FVO. Assuming nothing has changed then they were presumably missing a lot of infestations that were then imported. But for whatever reason nothing happened. Were the standards that were criticised actually adequate to achieve the goal of keeping this pest out and the relevant regulation requirements just gold plating?

PET DISEASES UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

Diseases that can be carried by pets and the impact they might have on human and other animal health, especially but not only farmed species - (presumably including fish farms and fisheries) is the subject of a three year EC funded study.

The project is known by the acronym CALLISTO - Companion Animals multisectorial interprofessional Interdisciplinary Strategic Think tank On zoonoses



It's aims are summarised as: "This project aims at providing an overview of the current situation, with regard to the role of companion animals as a source of infectious diseases for people and livestock. During a three years cycle, CALLISTO will identify knowledge and technology gaps for the most important zoonoses associated with keeping companion animals, and it will propose targeted actions to prevent and reduce the health risks for both humans and livestock."

OATA has been invited to participate in their meetings. Members are reminded OATA has a briefing note on zoonoses (diseases that can transmit from animals to man). If you have misplaced your copy then please let the office know or it will be available in the members area of the website.

A MAJOR SUCCESS – DELISTING OF EPIZOOTIC ULCERATIVE SYNDROME (EUS)

The box on the right was downloaded from the Animal Health site as we went to press. It clearly demonstrates that had, as proposed in 2006, controls been introduced concerning the import of fish that were deemed to be affected by or carry EUS then there could have been a massive impact on both popular tropical and coldwater fish.

OATA collaborating with colleagues at Ornamental Fish International and in Germany not only delayed the implementation date by six years but now successfully argued for the removal of EUS from the EU list of notifiable diseases.

Keith Davenport stated “The original listing was in many ways “a solution looking for a problem”. We are pleased to have played a key part in removing this listing from the statute book. The thought of the costs of testing, let alone the potential loss of all the species listed while disease free sites were found, could have run into £ millions. I certainly think compared to this the savings achieved on BIP charges are chump change.”



Newly listed exotic diseases

In October 2006, Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome (EUS) was added to the list of European Community exotic diseases. A transitional period, ending 31 December 2012, was allowed so that the disease could be monitored and tested and controls for EUS could be implemented around the world.

Species affected by EUS

As with other fish diseases, there are species that are susceptible to EUS and those that are carriers of it - ‘vector’ species.

Susceptible species are: gibelion, catla, snake-heads, multiple species of labeo, tyre track eels, mullets, barbs, gouramis

Vector species are: goldfish, crucian carp, common carp, koi carp, chub, roach, rudd, tench, bighead carp, silver carp, swan mussel, noble crayfish, signal crayfish, redswamp fish

Importing species affected by EUS

From 1 January 2013, if you import susceptible and vector species into Great Britain, they must be accompanied by the correct health certificate declaring them to be free from EUS.

If you import species from outside the EU, you need to confirm with your suppliers that they can obtain the correct health certification from their competent authority declaring the species free from EUS. If they aren’t able to, you should not use those suppliers to import these species of fish and shellfish.

AQUA 2013

There has been no Aqua this year. From now on it will be held every other year to avoid a clash with Interzoo. Next year AQUA will be held at the Telford International Centre on the Wednesday/Thursday 9th- 10th October 2013. More details are available on the show website at: www.aquatelford.co.uk/



Arrangements for next year are well in hand and already interest in stand space indicates this, the third Aqua, will be just as successful as the previous two. We look forward to seeing you there!

A FREE LEGAL HELPLINE

Members can use our free legal helpline for any legal queries they may have.

A free 10 minute discussion with a solicitor might allow you to make an informal decision on whether to proceed any further with a particular issue. If you choose to do so, this will be at your own expense.

01225 755621

www.fsmsolicitors.co.uk

Bluefin
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We are the Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association's appointed broker. We can offer you a free confidential review of your current insurance arrangements. You will receive a personal service from our dedicated team who will clearly explain all the details of your policy, so you know exactly what you're covered for.

We are one of the UK's leading independent insurance brokers operating from over 40 offices across the country. We provide clear, independent advice to businesses, professional firms and private clients on the best ways to protect their assets and cover their liabilities.

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HALF A MILLIONS VIEWS FOR OATA VIDEO'S

The series of videos launched by OATA last year have now been viewed half a million times. All have been viewed several thousand times each but the most popular "Setting up a Goldfish Aquarium" has achieved well over 350,000 views. Other videos covering the basics of setting up tropical freshwater and marine tanks are also in the series.

Remember these videos are available for members' use contact the office for details.



CARE SHEETS



licence conditions insist a paper care sheet is given at the time of sale - members are of course more than welcome to use the OATA sheets to fulfil this requirement as and where appropriate. All the care sheets are available from: www.ornamentalfish.org/caresheets/all.php

DON'T FORGET THE APP!

A "Fish keeping trouble shooter" App! is available by searching for "OATA" in Android Market.

INVASIVES

The issue of invasives again has taken up a fair amount of office time and looks likely to for years to come. Governments the world round are sensitised to the harmful ecological and economic impacts they may have. They are said to be the second greatest cause of extinctions after habitat destruction and cost economies up to 5% of total global GDP.



The pet industry has been the focus of much attention as we are highly visible and move animals and plants between over a hundred countries very frequently in large numbers. OATA has been involved with processes at national, regional (EC and Council of Europe) and globally (Convention on Biological Diversity and World Trade Organisation) levels.

ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT COMMITTEE

WILDLIFE CRIME REPORT

During the year the Commons Environmental Audit Committee held an enquiry into wildlife crime. OATA provided evidence on one of the topics of interest - invasive species. We pointed out that public awareness was a key to any successful scheme to avoid the introduction of invasive species. On the back of that enforcement agencies had to follow through and apply the law when cases of illegal introduction came to light.



House of Commons
Environmental Audit
Committee

The Environment Agency once again trotted out their line that they believed retail sale of species such as sturgeon should be banned as they could be released in the wild. We supplied Supplementary comments to the Committee after seeing this, pointing out that there well over a hundred fisheries where it was known that ILFA (Import of Live Fish Act) including sturgeon, species were present and should have been removed, that it had taken the EA 12 years to make their first prosecution under ILFA (the fishery owner had seemingly been allowed to keep the 6 ft long specimens in an ornamental pond).

An amusing aside was that an influential anglers' group rather than address the issue of how large specimens of ILFA species had spread so widely across the country chose to highlight the risks (as they saw it) of fish being flushed down the toilet and surviving to become invasive. We pointed out that while one must never say never the likelihood of fish surviving the sewers and sewerage works was very limited indeed. After all when sewage, even after dilution following discharge to rivers, is considered deadly to fish.

These are just a couple of examples of cheap shots that have been taken at the industry. Maybe those taking those shots just wish to divert attention from their own sector's role in issues.

CHANGES ON THE HORIZON

From England and Wales to a global scale changes are being thought of or proposed with regard to invasive controls. In England the Law Commission is reviewing wildlife law (including inevitably invasives), in Brussels a new Directive is being considered, while at global level discussions are afoot to see how controls on animal and plant diseases and pests can be used to address the invasives issue.



England

There are several laws which cover the release of animals and plants to the wild. The major one is the Wildlife and Countryside Act. This Act makes it an offence to allow the release of most non native animals to the wild or cause plants to grow in the wild. One problem has been that to know what the law is you need to know the contents of various annexes to the law. Its made more difficult still by the difficulties of defining what the "wild" is.

It might be that a recommendation to follow the approach in Scotland will follow. In Scotland the offence is to allow species out your control. This does appear to have made interpretation and explanation of the law straight forward and a useful way forward.

We still await sales bans on the five species of plant we have recommended members do not sell. This glacial progress towards concluding this matter contrasts sharply with urgency of calls for action by DEFRA.

EU

The development of a new Directive on invasives should come to a conclusion over the next couple of years. We will be watching two particular (though others will inevitably arise) areas:



A "**one size fits all**" approach in which a species regarded as potentially invasive anywhere in the EU would be controlled throughout the EU. Controls could include import, sales restrictions or bans – apple snails being an example Ultimately there could be such controls on ownership.

"**Black or white**" lists. A white list approach allows the trade in a restricted range of species while black lists contain only species that are controlled.

OATA will argue that controls should be based on restricted geographic areas in which species might be a problem.

The EU wide ban on importing Apple snails should be regarded as a warning what can happen if a "one size fits" all Directive comes out of the process.

Global

At a global level trade rules, covering live animals and plants, are established by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Sanitary and Phytosanitary agreement. The WTO SPS are in the process of looking at how the SPS can be used to control or manage invasive species by establishing guidelines on when and how governments may apply controls on species they consider are invasive.



As part of this process a meeting was held in Geneva. OATA and PJAC were invited to attend and make presentations. No other industry sector was invited to attend.

A key conclusion of the meeting was that stakeholders from the private sector should be consulted early in the process. Also crucial is raising public awareness of the issue and therefore the potential role played by each individuals actions in helping invasives spread.

It cannot be said that OATA is not promoting members interests anywhere we need to.

APPLE SNAILS

Despite vigorous lobbying by OATA we lost the argument on the continued import and sale of apple snails. From a very brief review of members' trade in the species concerned we estimated that the value of retail sales was £300k pa. The ban was imposed because the snails are present in the rice paddies of the Ebro delta in Spain –that said it is uncertain if these are permanent or ephemeral populations. Another concern was raised by “climate matching” which tended to indicate that there was an overlap between the temperature range in the natural range of these species in South America and East Anglia.



The response to threat was three fold:

- Imported plants will have to be inspected and declared free of snails prior to export to the EU
- No imports or movement of the species will be permitted.
- A restriction of movement of plants from infested areas.

The controls will come in when an Official Decision is published. This move demonstrates the dangers of the EC adopting “one size fits all” rules on invasives.

LISTS OF SPECIES TO BE BANNED:

Southern Ireland

We don't have members in Southern Ireland so why did we get involved in invasive issues there:

- They produced a list of species, in law, that could be banned by the stroke of a Ministers pen with out any published risk assessments to justify their actions. A bad precedent that if unchallenged could have been mimicked elsewhere in Europe or even in the proposed new Invasives Directive.
- OATA members export species such as koi that were included in the list to Southern Ireland thus we were also protecting their interests.

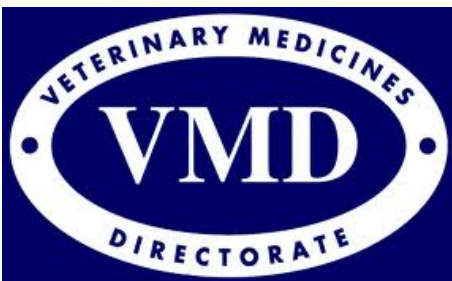
After an extended period of lobbying the relevant authorities in Southern Ireland agreed that no species from which people earned part of their livelihoods should be banned without first undertaking a risk assessment. A small but important decision influenced in part by OATA.

And Spain too

In a Spain a list including species like lionfish as invasives was produced

WHOLESALE AND VETERINARY MEDICINES

OATA played an active role along with a number of manufacturing members in helping establish the Small Animal Exemption Scheme for veterinary medicines. This allows treatments on the market, thus underpinning animal welfare, at a very much reduced cost. Of course as with any system it can be criticised but the options taken in other countries have led to removal of products from shelves or being available only via vets.



There remained a number of irritants. Some we have not been able to do anything about such as the level of inspection fees but we have reduced the administrative burden on wholesalers. Part of the system to ensure products could, in the event of a problem be recalled, meant extensive records had to be kept by manufacturers and wholesalers. We accepted someone had to keep this

information but did it have to be kept by two different businesses? One wholesaler we visited would have had to create 10's of thousands of records at a cost that might have meant they had to stop selling treatments.

After lobbying a more sensible approach that still allowed the recall of treatments was introduced. Recognising that the Regulations were first established before easy electronic transfer of information it was agreed that as long as certain information could be easily obtained then not every one in the supply chain had to create their own versions avoiding unnecessary costs and transcription errors. It saved businesses money and ensured as wide as possible range of choices to retailers as the wholesalers they bought goods from.

KHV

DEFRA launched a light touch consultation on the whether the choice of KHV “infected” zone for England and Wales was correct. Previously there were fears that KHV would sweep through every fishery in the country wiping out carp stocks used for angling as it went. These fears seem misplaced as there have been fewer than 10 outbreaks this year rather than hundreds as some predicted. That could have course been because of the cold weather-KHV not causing a disease until water temperatures rise above 15 degrees centigrade. Recent research by CEFAS does seem to show it could only cause real problems in the south of the country but of course that is where most carp fisheries are found.

Few outbreaks seems like good news. However, it might be argued by some that this means that just like SVC KHV could be eradicated and so a different zoning for England and Wales should be sought by DEFRA. Eradication zone status would bring with it tight controls on imports which would bring mixed reception from with our industry.

There are strong views on both sides of the argument ie to keep infected status or go for eradication status in the ornamental sector. However one thing that has changed in the last couple of years is scientific pressure to list goldfish as susceptible to KHV. Moving to “eradication” zone would stop the import of vaccinated fish and mean koi and goldfish could only come to England and Wales from disease free sites.

SELECTIVE BREEDING OF PETS OTHER THAN DOGS

You may remember that Panorama ran a program looking at the problems caused by selectively breeding dogs. Over the last year the Companion Animal Welfare Council (CAWC) has started to look at the same issues in other species groups including fish. A number of selectively bred fish have been open to comment as possibly causing welfare problems for example Bubble eyes, Celestials, eggfish, Lionchu. Lion fish, Pom Pom, Ranchu and Tosakin goldfish. These varieties have been with us for a significant time and some have cultural significance, thus when asked OATA chose to identify traits that would not be acceptable in any future varieties produced. These would include varieties with:

- neurological problems
- compromised sensory functions
- survival dependent on veterinary interventions
- inability to breed naturally
- inability to feed normally

It is quite clear that this will be an issue that we will continue to face well into the future.

THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN 2013

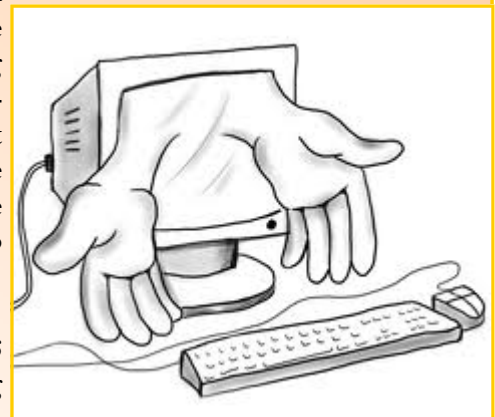
<p>Reports or visits by the Food and Veterinary Office of the EC</p>	<p>Expect reports on visits to UK Border Inspection Posts and China to investigate the status of SVC in that country.</p> <p>Deferred from 2012 is a visit to Singapore to investigate the trade in aquatic plants (and presumably the standard of official controls on the presence of <i>Bemisia tabacci</i> on exports).</p> <p>The official 2013 schedule of visits will not be published until late this, or early, next year.</p>
<p>Further increases in charges in the pursuit of "full cost recovery"</p>	<p>Big increases in charges at Border Inspection Posts were proposed but were not implemented this October. It is likely there will be even greater pressure for increases in either April or October next year. As government funding is cut, increases in charges could increase in any area where officials incur costs.</p>
<p>Ecodesign Directive</p>	<p>Progress toward a conclusion on whether legally enforceable design specifications will be introduced for aquarium, pond and fountain pumps.</p>
<p>Pet Shop Licence Conditions</p>	<p>New guidelines introduced by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. Will we finally see a common standard applied to all UK pet shops?</p>
<p>Progress toward an EU Directive on Invasives</p>	<p>Though unlikely to be finalised this year the general tenor of the Directive might be. If its decided a "one size fits all" policy is taken then what might cause problems in Cyprus could be banned in the UK or even Finland. White lists or blacklists?</p>
<p>Development of a new plant and animal health regime</p>	<p>Will this make the system coherent or just make everything so complicated no one can understand it, so it achieves nothing.</p>
<p>Outcome of the review of KHV</p>	<p>Though introduced as a light touch review the anglers may increase the pressure for England and Wales to become an "eradication" zone which could mean only unvaccinated koi from designated disease-free sites could be imported. Could goldfish be named as a susceptible species?</p>

EUS is out of our hair will WSD cause us problems in the New Year?	White Spot Disease affects all decapods (crabs etc). The UK or even the EU could declare itself disease free.
Outcome of the Law Commission's review of wildlife crime published.	Work towards a new legal framework in England and Wales (including invasive species) commences.
CITES	A decision will be reached over proposals from Colombia to list several freshwater stingray species on the same Appendix as hard corals.
AQUA 2013	The third Aqua show will be held on Wednesday/ Thursday October 9-10 th see more details at http://www.aquatelford.co.uk
Barley straw	As new Biocides Regulations are implemented it could make it too costly to market barley straw.
More interest in the pet industry from animal rights and other groups opposed to trade in pets	As more groups opposed to animals in captivity take an interest in our industry expect more concerted lobbying by well resourced pressure groups.
Callisto - zoonoses	This EU wide project will report and highlight the impact (if any) of keeping pets on human and food animal health.
Access and Benefit Sharing	As the EU develop legislation in this controversial area will our industry be ignored as too small or caught up in a detailed international web of rules?
Invasives in Eire	Will the Irish ban koi? Or any of a range of pond and aquarium plants?
Report of the impact of selective breeding on pet welfare	The Companion Animal Welfare Council report on this topic should become available.
Plastic Bags	England looks likely to follow Northern Ireland and Wales and apply a compulsory 5p charge to free plastic bags. Fish bags have been exempted elsewhere but not any other bag.

HELPING RETAILERS...

In the OATA office we often just get a job done and just move on to the next one forgetting to let members what we have achieved and so how we can (and have) helped them. Some examples of our help to individual retailers, rather than the bigger outcomes which apply to all, this year include:

- Helping identify unlicensed pet shops selling live fish on the internet but getting local authorities to take an interest in their activities. This year several have had visits from licensing officers which might discourage them. At least one e-tailer decided to become a registered pet shop so they could continue trading. We do rely on reports from members suffering unfair competition from these “enterprises” to offer this service. We can’t survey the web for possible candidates to be brought to the attention of the authorities.
- A fish only retailer was told that his staff had to under take the Pet Shop Management course-no ifs, buts or maybes. We intervened explaining that knowing where a gerbil kept its marbles (we did use the more usual term “how to sex a small rodent”) was not going to help in ensure the welfare of guppies. Equally as the particular outlet had strong administrative support centrally that the management section was not as relevant in these circumstances as it might be in others. The outcome was that the council saw sense and agreed that in these circumstances the OATA distance learning materials, which is what this outlet wanted to follow, was indeed appropriate and acceptable.
- Someone wishing to set up a new aquatic outlet was told 6 months was the normal time to issue a new license. Being used a much short period elsewhere in the country and having started to stock systems in advance of opening weeks (not months) hence it would have meant severe constraints on trade as no live fish would have been available. OATA help formulate a response. The pet shop license was issue in days.



AQUA 2013



Aqua 2013 at the Telford International Centre 9-10 October 2013.

Book your stand now don't miss the show for the Water Gardening and Aquatics Event.

Visit the Show and meet all the names at the free show dinner including entertainment

[AQUA 2013](#)