



ORNAMENTAL AQUATIC TRADE ASSOCIATION LTD.

"The Voice of the Ornamental Fish Industry"

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Dear Sir Robert

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee to highlight the lack of provision at seaports for the import of live animals.

You may be aware that later next year (date to be determined) all live animals will need to pass through a Border Control Post (BCP) designated for that animal (not all BCPs will accept all animals). Most live ornamental fish for the pet trade enter Great Britain through the 4 airport BCPs designated for them. However, significant numbers also arrive through seaports, a route often chosen by smaller businesses who buy direct from European suppliers, particularly if they specialise in certain species, and because it is a cheaper alternative to flying them in.

We are greatly concerned that currently there will be only one BCP (Sevington inland border facility) designated to handle ALL live animal imports that enter Great Britain from Europe by road or ferry. That includes farm animals and animals for the pet trade, including ornamental fish. This will place enormous pressure on Sevington and all other live animal BCPs as people divert their supply routes to them. We believe this will result in massive delays with serious welfare impacts.

We understand the Government recently launched a £20 million infrastructure fund to try to entice operators to build BCPs to increase capacity for live animal import checks for maritime trade routes in England. We believe this is too little and certainly far too late to meet the late 2024 deadline when border inspections are planned to commence.

We urge you to raise this lack of readiness with the Secretary of State for Defra, the Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP. This is not just an issue for our industry but for all industries that move live animals to and from Great Britain. To have just one seaport able to receive live animals in the whole of Great Britain should be a major concern but we struggle to get Defra to acknowledge the problem.

To avoid serious animal welfare impacts, the Government must rethink its approach to the provision of seaport BCPs at the UK border. We would suggest this could include a range of interim measures such as:

- Introducing a reciprocal veterinary agreement with the EU to enable the import/export of live animals between the UK and the EU without the need for inspections at the border on entry.

- Giving access to the planned Trusted Trader scheme for aquatic businesses with a good history of compliance. Tropical fish present a very low biosecurity risk to the UK.
- Extending the Points of Destination scheme currently in place for certain plant imports to live animals to enable inspections to take place away from the border. This would work very well for ornamental fish.
- Extending the date requiring animals to pass through BCPs until there is a sufficient geographically diverse number built to receive them.

We would appreciate your help to raise awareness of this issue with Defra. I am happy to assist with any further information you might require.

Yours sincerely



Dominic Whitmee
Chief Executive