



ORNAMENTAL AQUATIC TRADE ASSOCIATION
LTD

"The voice of the ornamental fish industry"

Wessex House, 40 Station Road, Westbury, Wiltshire, BA13 3JN, UK

Telephone: +44(0)8700 434013 Fax: +44(0)1373 301236

info@ornamentalfish.org www.ornamentalfish.org www.aquaticsworldwide.org

IMPORT OF GM ORNAMENTAL FISH

We understand that approaches have been made recently to importers in the UK offering genetically modified ornamental fish.

To legally import these fish the following conditions must be met:

European Directive 2001/18 governs the release and marketing of GMOs in the European Union. It provides for proposed releases of GMOs to be considered very carefully on a case by case basis, underpinned by a detailed risk assessment. In Great Britain, the Directive is implemented by Part VI of the Environmental Protection Act and (in England) Genetically Modified Organisms (Deliberate Release) 2002. (Similar regulations have been implemented in Scotland and Wales). This legislation has the stated purpose 'of ensuring that all appropriate measures are taken to avoid damage to the environment which may arise from the escape or release from human control of genetically modified organisms'.

The import and release of live GM fish would therefore require consent under Directive 2001/18. For commercial import (as opposed to for research), this would require collective EU agreement based on an assessment of the risk to human health and the environment. The information needed to consider the release of GM fish would include, as with all releases, the specifics of the genetic modification, the effect of the genetic modification on the fish and details of the breeding system (including the possibility of interbreeding with the wild population). The Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE) would also consider if there were any novel questions that should be asked. Each application would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Thus import of these fish is not a straightforward issue and anyone wishing to do so should carefully acquaint themselves with the pieces of legislation mentioned above.

This legislation does not include varieties produced by selective breeding.

OATA has previously stated that it feels that GM ornamental fish are an unwelcome addition to the market place.