NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE USE

17 January 2013

OATA RESPONSE TO SCIENTIFIC PAPER ON ANTIBIOTICS RESISTANCE IN TROPICAL FISH

Humans do run the risk of picking up diseases from all sorts of activities in everyday life and we should all be encouraged to follow good hygiene practises, such as washing our hands thoroughly, to help cut down on the risk of picking these up. So diseases can pass from animals to humans, known as zoonoses, but it’s rare from ornamental fish and following good hygiene practises should further minimise the risk.

And unfortunately the resistance to antibiotics is not a new issue for the aquatic industry and the indiscriminate use of these drugs without proper veterinary supervision in other countries is of real concern. There are big discrepancies across the world on how easily antibiotics are available over the counter which contributes to this problem. In this country, antibiotics must only be prescribed by vets who are directly supervising the treatment of the fish.

Keeping tropical fish is a great hobby and we hope people aren’t put off this fascinating pastime. With a little careful thought, good hygiene practises and buying from reputable retailers, such as those who are members of OATA, people can enjoy their fish without great problems.

Our advice when handling fish is:

- Always wash your hands thoroughly after working with fish.
- Always cover open wounds with a waterproof bandage and wear rubber or plastic gloves of a suitable length.
- Do not prime water siphons by mouth.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke while working on your aquarium or pond.
- Do not wash nets and equipment in sinks intended for human use.
- Immuno-suppressed persons (infected with HIV or receiving chemotherapy) should not handle potentially infected materials.
- Wash and disinfect contaminated work surfaces regularly.

There is more information in our Zoonoses information sheet which can be found on the OATA website. The original scientific paper ‘Imported ornamental fish are colonized with antibiotic-resistant bacteria’ appeared in a recent edition of Journal of Fish Diseases.

Ends

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Notes to Editors

OATA (the Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association) was established in 1991 and currently represents more than 700 members from across the ornamental aquatic industry from importers and wholesalers to suppliers and retailers. Its core mission is to protect and promote the ornamental aquatic industry and to ensure its longevity through proactive and continuous lobbying and marketing activity at local, national and international levels by working closely with national and international government bodies.

Sent on email to:
Pet Product Marketing/Practical Fishkeeping
Pet Business World
Pet Gazette
Pet Trade World
Pet Trade Xtra