

VOLUME 28 NO 1 AUTUMN 2018

JOHN DAWES REPORTS FIJI'S CORALS BACK IN TRADE

LOST PET MICROCHIP AND REGISTRATION TO THE RESCUE, OR NOT? CAROLINE ZAMBRANO INVESTIGATES

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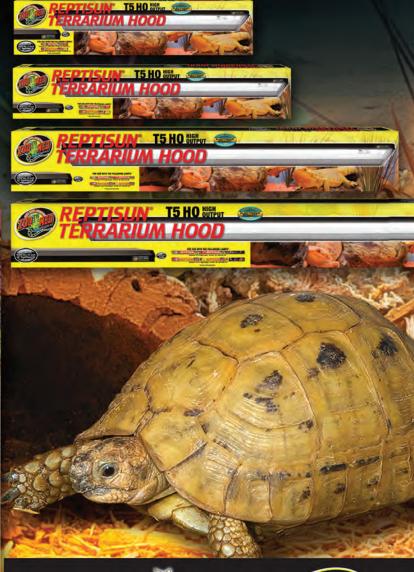
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LOST PET! MICROCHIP AND REGISTRATION TO THE RESCUE OR NOT?

Every day hundreds of companion animals are reported lost or missing. Many end up in pounds, shelters or vet clinics with a good chance of seeing their owners again if they are microchipped and registered. But the requirements and processes of identifying and reuniting pets with their owners isn't as quick and simple. **Caroline Zambrano** investigates.

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The report states nationwide 83% of dogs (up 7% from 2013) and 72% of cats (up 9% from 2013) are now microchipped.

Earlier this year, Harri, a pet Australian galah, flew away from his home in Queensland and was missing for two weeks. The adventurous rose-breasted cockatoo flew to the Portside Wharf Cruise Ship Terminal about 2km away from his Brisbane home and took a ride on a luxury cruise liner bound for New Zealand!

Thankfully, Harri was microchipped and registered, which eventually led authorities back to its owners, according to a statement from the New Zealand's Ministry of Primary Industries. Perhaps Harri wanted to go on a holiday (and clearly didn't realise NZ had strict biosecurity laws!), but his owners were devastated as they searched desperately for their beloved bird fearing they would never see Harri again.

For many pet owners, losing a companion animal is like losing a member of the family, and that's terrifying! Sadly, every year, thousands and thousands of pets are reported lost/missing or even stolen. Reuniting lost pets with their owners is one of the most critical functions of shelters, councils and even veterinarians who see numerous strays coming through their doors each day.

Microchipping and registration systems /processes across the country are working to get companion animals back home as quickly as possible, but they are also creating some challenges, according to pet industry members.

Pet owner education and better microchipping/registration management are key to getting our pets safely and quickly back home. Do we need a national registry or share microchip registration data to work more effectively in reuniting our companion animals? What initiatives, programs and platforms are helping to increase the likelihood of owners finding their lost pets? Where can we improve the systems and processes?

Microchipping and registration of animals are a vital identification tool and is a step towards a lifetime of responsible pet ownership. Microchip implantation provides a reliable method of permanent, unalterable animal identification. No personal information is stored on a microchip – only a unique 15-digit number that by Australian law meets the specifications of the world standard International Standards Organisation (ISO).

Benefits of pet registration include improved animal welfare and rehoming outcomes, as well as reduced euthanasia rates for dogs and cats across the country. On a larger scale, microchipping and registration can be invaluable following a natural disaster where a large number of animals can be displaced.

Many state government and local councils see the benefits and importance of microchipping pets, making microchipping and registration compulsory across most parts of Australia. This has helped increase the number of microchipped pets nationwide over the past three years, according to Animal Medicines Australia's 2016 Pet Ownership in Australia report.

The report states nationwide 83% of dogs (up 7% from 2013) and 72% of cats (up 9% from 2013) are now microchipped. Dog microchipping rates are higher in Victoria (89%) and lower in South Australia (72%) and Western Australia (73%).

So how many microchipped pets find their way back home compared to those without the electronic identification? The Australian pet/vet industry does not have national data comparing the 'reuniting' rate of microchipped animals to those without the electronic identification under their skin.

However, RSPCA Australia's 2016-2017 annual financial report has some national data that supports microchipped animals having a better chance of being reunited. Furthermore, many more owners reclaim lost dogs from the RSPCA than they do lost cats. The animals who don't return to their loved ones are mainly those who are not microchipped or their owners' contact information linked to their microchip registration is not current¹.

"The RSPCA stresses the utmost

importance of microchipping pets to ensure the best chances of reuniting pets with owners in the unfortunate event of a pet becoming lost," said Dr Bronwyn Orr, RSPCA Australia Scientific Officer for Companion Animals.

According to RSPCA's last financial year report, 40.63% of dogs and 4.93% of cats were reclaimed. During the 2012-2013 financial year, 36.5% of dogs and 4.6% of cats were reclaimed. The data does not specify how many of these animals were microchipped but given the increase in the number of microchipped dogs and cats over the past few years (thanks to compulsory microchipping legislation), microchipped animals have a better chance of returning home compared to those without the chip.

RSPCA Australia's report confirms this interpretation in its latest financial report. Also, with the increasing uptake of microchip identification for cats, the RSPCA hopes to see an increase in the number of lost cats that are reunited with their owners over the coming years.

"There are a number of initiatives run by councils, pet stores and some RSPCA shelters across the country where discounted microchipping is made available," said Dr Orr.

INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY HELP FIND LOST PETS

Tony Ryder, Founder and CEO of Lost Pet Finders, the largest national, open lost and found pet database in Australia (conceived and launched in South Australia about 12 years ago), said most cats and dogs on the database are microchipped and that's a great start to getting them back home as quickly as possible.

"Microchipping is definitely recommended where possible as it is the most efficient way to be reunited with their pet once it has been secured," he said. "I believe the state governments are doing their best to introduce legislations that improve the welfare of lost and found pets. A state-run registry or national registry can work as long as they can be accessed 24 hours a day and the data shared between agencies to prevent duplicate owner registrations."

Asked how many pets go missing each year, Mr Ryder said it is impossible to calculate the numbers due to a number of factors, such as how long a pet has to be missing to count as missing or how far from home they wandered.

"A true increase in the ratio of lost pets would likely be due to other influences including rising unemployment. We have been able to maintain a low ratio of lost pets through innovation and technology," he explained. "Any increase in lost pets being reported would be more likely related to online resources becoming available and more visible, such as our lost pet Facebook boosting which allows us to promote lost pets on social media like an advertisement targeted locally."

Database analysis over the past few years shows 1.5% of lost pets registered in 2015, 5% from 2016 and 4.6% from 2017 are still actively missing on the Lost Pet Finders registry.

"There is no one simple solution for finding a lost pet - including microchips. They all have their disadvantages," said Mr Ryder. "The solution has always been to let as many people know about the missing pet and to provide a platform like Lost Pet Finders where lost and found pets can be recorded and matched locally and nationally."

The problem with microchipping, he said, is that the chip only works once the pet has been captured. "Some pets can roam for many weeks/months!" he exclaimed.

Microchips can also fail, migrate or be removed. And because there is more than one microchip registry, a vet or shelter/ pound may not have access to the database the chip is registered with and it can take a council pound several days to scan a microchip, he explained.

Animal rescue organisations may not verify chip details for surrendered pets

and most importantly, chips are no good unless they are scanned! The main problem reported to Lost Pet Finders is that the owner's information recorded against the chip is not up to date, said Mr Ryder.

"Any of the registries have the chance of being effective but are only as good as the information they contain, so if pet owners do not keep their contact details up to date, none of the systems will work. It also relies on all of the pet-related industries, such as vets, pounds and councils, doing their part by scanning for chips in a timely fashion - especially on deceased pets which are often overlooked," he said.

"There is also some hesitation by members of the public to surrender a found pet as they are concerned for the pet's welfare once at the pound, so the microchip may never be read by a pet professional. Plus, having a microchip can give pet owners a false sense of security. Some people falsely assume that the chip can be found via GPS or that an ear tattoo is a mark that the pet has been chipped. Some also believe that the pet is not chipped if they cannot feel the capsule under the skin."

UNDERSTANDING MICROCHIPPING AND REGISTRATION IN AUSTRALIA

Whilst compulsory microchipping is helping to reunite lost animals with their families, inconsistent legislation on microchipping and registry operation/ management across the Australian states and territories is preventing many others from returning home.

In summary, at the current time, all states except Northern Territory have made microchipping compulsory. When it comes to registration, only dogs – not cats - must be registered in ACT, QLD, WA, TAS, while in NSW and SA dogs and cats must be registered. Northern Territory does not have any requirements for registration of pets at this time².

Pets in NSW are registered for life, unlike other states that require the annual renewal of pet registration Remember, pets in NSW are registered for life, unlike other states that require the annual renewal of pet registration. Online forums include complaints by pet owners who have moved interstate from NSW and confused about registering their pet again and then having to pay annually, which has suddenly become an additional financial burden for some.

And just to clarify, council registration is separate to national animal microchip registration. Furthermore, if you live in NSW or South Australia, you will need to register your pet with the state government-run registry, which won't r eally help identify the owner of the animal if lost interstate.

The advice given to the travelling public by the NSW Pet Registry, an online state government-run database of microchipped and registered cats and dogs living in NSW, is to also register their pets with a national microchip registry.

"Why can't all the registries – including the state government registries - share the microchip data to help our lost animals come back home more quickly?" asked Pet People Network Director Maryann Dalton, who consults on issues involving the companion animal industry.

"We are a transient population that travels around Australia with their pets, whether it be for holiday or a permanent move. If you relocate from NSW to WA, nobody tells you that your lifetime registration in NSW means nothing if you're living on the west coast. You need to transfer your pet's chip to a WA register and renew every year. Otherwise, if your animal goes missing and gets picked up, the microchip won't register and your pet could end up in the pound!"

Ms Dalton was a member of the Animal Registries Working Group - made up of representatives from commercial microchip registries, vet industry and some members of local governments - which aimed to formalise a national microchip register. This register would work as a national portal where anyone who owns a microchip animal in Australia could access the portal to search for lost pets regardless of the state they lived in, she explained.





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"In the end, creating a national registry appears to have become just too hard to do," said Ms Dalton. "This country has states and territories that each have their own companion animal legislation; plus, there's the federal government. Sadly, the local, state and federal governments do not communicate well with each other when it comes to re-homing companion animals."

The Pet Industry Association would also ideally like to see a national microchip register, said CEO Mark Fraser.

"We have given input to both NSW and South Australian governments and are happy with their plans for a state-run pet microchip register. Our issue is that they all keep creating their own register instead of working with other states to create a national combined register. Even to work with the same templates would be a good start," said Mr Fraser.

PET ADDRESS PORTAL WORKING EFFECTIVELY

Dr Doug Black, owner/director of Microchips Australia (a distributor of microchips and readers) and director of national companion animal microchip registry Central Animal Records (CAR), said there is already a collaborative portal of registries that works successfully in reuniting lost pets with their owners.

Pet Address (www.petaddress.com. au) is like a registry of registries formed in 2007 by CAR, Australasian Animal Registry (AAR), PetSafe and National Pet Register (NPR), and keeps track of what microchips are registered in which registries. To find out with which – if any – registry the pet is registered with, simply type in the microchip number in the search bar and view the results.

Just to be clear, Pet Address does not store the pet or owner information - it simply checks each registry database for the location of the chip number and if the chip number has an animal linked to it.

"All of the companion animal microchip registries in Australia are linked to Pet Address (except for the NSW Government's pet registry)," said Dr Black. "There are no other functional animal microchip registries licensed or approved by States to reunite pets with owners."

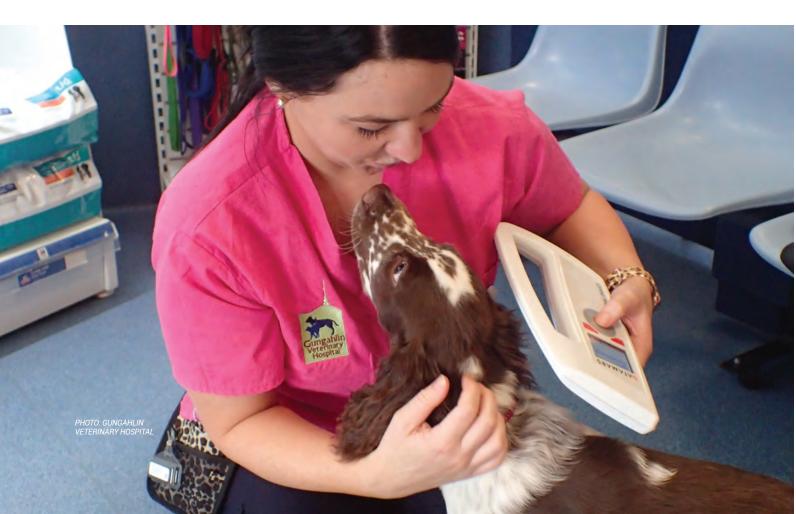
If a Greyhound turns up lost and its microchip can't be located via Pet

Address, the owner can be found by contacting the relevant State greyhound racing body. When Greyhounds are retired from the racing industry to become pets, they are registered on one of the national microchip registries, he explained.

"Pet Address gained cooperation from all the national animal microchip registries, except for NSW Pet Registry, who have, at least, indicated their willingness to link to Pet Address in the future," said Dr Black. "The South Australian Dogs and Cats Online (DACO) registry is yet to be commissioned and they have indicated they are looking at linking with Pet Address but have yet to make that decision."

More recently, CAR took over the management of the NPR database – the country's third largest registry – further cementing CAR as Australia's largest microchip registry with 4 million animals. Today, Pet Address is co-funded by all of the founding national microchip registries (now minus NPR) as well as Homesafe ID and Global Micro Animal Registry.

"The system works well with all of the registries communicating with the Pet Address portal, and that's what is



happening now," said Dr Black.

The idea of introducing microchip identification to Australia came about in the 1980s by Dr Black and his veterinary colleagues Dr Rick Walduck and Dr David Madill after Dr Madill returned from a veterinary conference in Hawaii. The microchips they learned about were designed for identifying valuable zoo species, but the three Aussie vets thought it could be used as a permanent identification for companion animals.

"In those days, when we found a stray, we would put notices up and contact the council, hoping that someone will contact us. It was a disaster," said Dr Black. "We thought if we can have one chip, one reader and one register, it would make it easier for people to be reunited with their pets."

CAR and AAR launched around the same time in 1989. AAR – a division of the Royal Agriculture Society of NSW (RAS) – is the largest not-for-profit and most comprehensive animal registration and recovery service in Australasia, maintaining records for 2.6 million animals across Australia and New Zealand, including zoo animals.

It took many years for the concept of microchipping to be accepted as councils and vets slowly took up readers, microchipping was promoted to pet owners and state governments finally began legislating for compulsory microchipping.

What also contributed to the chip being an accepted part of responsible pet ownership is pets started playing a more important role in the family, explained Donna Cotter, manager of AAR.

"People spend so much money on their pets – accessories, grooming, pet hotels, pet sitters and dog walkers – it all evolved over the years. People now have become more conscious of their animal being a part of the family and don't want to lose it," she said.

Ms Cotter wants to see laws that puts everyone – councils, national registries, state government registries – all on the same page in accessing microchip records for the retrieval of the animal to find the right owner. All of the companion animal microchip registries in Australia are linked to Pet Address (except for the NSW Government's pet registry),

"Also, a registry is as good as the data given," she said. "So often we get change of ownerships and the previous owner hasn't signed the request. We have to write to the previous owner and chase up their approval."

Ms Cotter said the majority of pet owners and breeders are responsible, but more education is needed to make the microchipping system work well.

"The responsibility for educating pet owners about microchipping and registration lies with the seller or the source of the animal; to start pet owners on the right foot," she said. "At the end of the day, it's about the care of the animal and getting it back to the rightful owner."

PET ADDRESS FACES CHALLENGES

Pet Address works well, but it faces some challenges, according to microchip registry authorities. Some animals are listed under more than one register and can be potentially frustrating for authorities looking them up, explained Dr Black. One register may have redundant or not current data, and waste time in finding the register with the most up-todate contact information.

"One of the initiatives Pet Address is working on is to only list the register with the most current pet owner data," he said. "Important records cannot be deleted, just made inactive."

Another issue of nuisance involves maintaining a chain of ownership of the microchip.

"There's a crying need for some point of national registry for microchip distributors in Australia," said Dr Black. "People are sourcing microchips from overseas and selling to various authorised implanters in Australia. When these microchips are being implanted, they may not be entered onto a registry database. What registries then rely on is a skeleton record to those microchips and where they were sold to." Here's an example: when a dog is found with a microchip that is not on any registry database (the chip wasn't registered for whatever reason), the chip can then be traced back to the distributor and then the implanter (ie vet clinic) who can then look up the dog's owner.

"If we find the owner contact information has not been updated, in that instance the dog will never be reunited with the family," said Dr Black. "If we knew from the national microchip distributor registry the clinic that implanted the chip, we can then contact the clinic to try to locate the pet's owner."

Another issue that can be a concern is microchip failure, which isn't common but if it happens it will more likely happen in a cheaper, less quality assured product, said Dr Black.

"If microchip failure occurs, it is vital to be able to know who imported and sold that chip, or that batch of chips to then alert pet owners who have had pets identified using that same brand or batch of microchip," he explained. "This is another reason that a national registry of microchip distributors should exist – to minimise the risk of a pet not being found and to hold all microchip distributors accountable."

One way to check that microchips are working is for vets to scan the microchips on a regular basis – for instance, every time the pet comes in for a health check, he suggested.

IMPORTED ANIMALS MUST HAVE ISO CHIP

Another reason why chips can fail to be read is that it's not the same technology detected by scanners in Australia.

ACT veterinarian Dr Michael Hayward, who represented the Australian Veterinary Association in the Animal Registries Working Group, said a small population of animals microchipped overseas with a different (non-ISO) technology come into Australia and scanners cannot decipher the chip,

^{1.} WWW.RSPCA.ORG.AU/FACTS/ANNUAL-STATISTICS-2015-16/DOGS

^{2.} HTTP://KB.RSPCA.ORG.AU/IS-IT-MANDATORY-TO-REGISTER-DOMESTIC-DOGS-AND-CATS_285.HTML

particularly if the chip is 'encrypted', such that it requires a brand specific reader to decipher the chip number.

"We encourage pet owners who import an animal to ensure it has an ISO chip. If it doesn't, a second chip that meets ISO standards can easily be implanted," said Dr Hayward.

Dr Hayward has been a vet for 35 years during which he has held (and still does) various AVA roles, including local division president, member of the AVA's Urban Animal Management Committee and other veterinary groups, and represented the AVA on ACT and national animal welfare committees. He is currently a director of Gungahlin Veterinary Hospital in Canberra.

Numerous stray animals walk through the large 12-vet practice every single day. His analysis showed 86 stray dogs and cats came through the door in January!

"The good news is that the majority of animals have a microchip and for the most part, it's easy for staff to identify who owns them thanks to the Pet Address website," said Dr Hayward.

The problem arises when the microchip search comes up blank. Because the ACT is located in the middle of NSW, many lost pets were bred in NSW and are registered with the NSW Pet Registry, which as we know does not share data on Pet Address to maintain a level of privacy.

"Many breeders are good with transferring registry details to the new owners, but some take a long time to complete the transfer of ownership," said Dr Hayward. "This is a big deal for us because it's difficult to access data out of NSW's database. Our sole purpose is to return animals home. We vets have a legitimate right to check the microchip data. Animals may fail to be or be delayed in being registered on a database because of failures by the implanter, the breeder or the new owner." "The AVA has lobbied governments to encourage them to not start their own registry," said Dr Hayward. "ACT government recognises there is no value in having their own registry. They maintain microchip numbers for compliance reasons, such as dog attacks."

To prevent potential problems with accessing information on the NSW and AGRA databases, Dr Hayward recommends all clients to also register on a national registry so that their contact information can always be accessed no matter where their pet goes missing. It's also easier for owners to update their information on the national databases, he added.

What could further help Pet Address work more effectively is making the sale of microchips illegal unless the skeleton record - including the microchip number, manufacturer and importer - is registered in a database, said Dr Hayward.

"The skeleton record should then be annotated each time the chip is sold from importer to wholesaler to retailer to implanter and then to pet (and owner). I would welcome regulation of microchips from importation through to implantation. It would provide security for pet owners and everyone in the industry," he said. "Increasing the number of databases - and particularly with restrictions that governments feel they need to work under - makes it difficult for pet owners and industry professionals to make the entire system work effectively and easily. Ideally, we should have a single national microchip registry, but that won't happen. The next best option is to have a common portal. Pet Address exists and does very well."

HOW DOES THE NSW PET REGISTRY WORK EXACTLY?

So how does the NSW Pet Registry work and how effective is it in reuniting lost pets with their families? Launched

The good news is that the majority of animals have a microchip and for the most part, it's easy for staff to identify who owns them thanks to the Pet Address website in 2016, the NSW Pet Registry is the public portal to the Companion Animals Register and was a NSW Government election commitment to transition away from a dated, paper-based companion animals' management system.

One of the main aims of the NSW Pet Registry is to encourage lifetime pet registration, and the benefits of pet registration include improved animal welfare and rehoming outcomes, as well as reduced euthanasia rates for the state's cats and dogs, explained Kerrielyn Clark, media spokesperson for the NSW Office of Local Government.

Access to the NSW Companion Animals Register is restricted to vets and other authorised users, but the public Pet Registry portal (www.petregistry.nsw.gov. au) enables pet owners and breeders to update the register including their contact details and transfer of pet ownership, and allows them to complete all-important lifetime pet registration.

"There were 100,000 paid registrations logged on the NSW Pet Registry for the 16-17 financial year," said Ms Clark. "A key benefit of keeping pet details upto-date on the NSW Pet Registry is that owners can also report pets missing, allowing pets and owners to be more easily reunited."

Via the NSW Pet Registry every year around 5,000 cats and dogs are reported lost or missing, and about half of these are successfully reunited with their owners, helping to reduce the numbers of animals in animal shelters and the numbers of animals needing to be euthanised, said Ms Clark. In addition, the NSW Pet Registry also helps manage nuisance, dangerous and menacing dogs, improving community safety.

"All fees collected by the NSW Pet Registry go back into the management of companion animals," she said. "Eighty per cent of the revenue is used by councils for services such as rangers and running pounds. Twenty per cent goes towards the NSW Government's Responsible Pet Ownership Program (RPOP), which helps ensure that families enjoy the benefits of owning a pet, while minimising the risks of dangerous dogs especially to young children."



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WILL THE NSW PET REGISTRY **INTEGRATE WITH PET ADDRESS?**

"The NSW Companion Animals Register is a State Government database provided for councils to record registration information of NSW's cats and dogs. It records only NSW council registrations and is not a national register of microchips or owners," said Ms Clark.

"With animal welfare as a key objective, the NSW Government attempts to help interstate authorities to reunite lost animals by contacting owners where information from NSW council registration information is available. People moving pets interstate are advised to contact their local council/authority regarding pet registration requirements within that state or territory and to list their pet's microchip with one of the commercial microchip registers.

"In addition to a broader suite of legislative reforms, the NSW Government is developing additional functions for the NSW Pet Registry and is committed to future information sharing and crossjurisdictional engagement to reunite lost pets and reduce euthanasia rates."

SOUTH AUSTRALIA MAKES **MICROCHIPPING MANDATORY**

Following in NSW's footsteps, the South Australian government has passed legislation making it mandatory to register microchips with a state-wide, one-stop online pet information portal that replaces individual council registers, called Dogs and Cats Online (DACO).

As of 1 July 2018, all owned dogs and cats must be microchipped (and desexed, with exemptions applied) and registered with Dogs and Cats Online, among some other legal requirements. Until now microchipping (and desexing) has been voluntary for most dogs and cats.

Microchipping rates were increasing for many years but then plateaued, said Andrew Lamb, Secretary of the South Australian Dog and Cat Management Board.

"About 70% of registered dogs and a similar number of registered cats have been microchipped. Unfortunately, 70% of dogs and cats arriving at shelters and pounds aren't microchipped. Making microchipping mandatory is a way to

increase microchipping rates, increase the percentage of lost pets that are safely returned home and to reduce euthanasia rates," said Mr Lamb.

"Changes to legislation will require vets or microchip implanters to upload details directly into Dogs and Cats Online, which will significantly increase the percentage of pets whose microchip details are stored."

Mr Lamb said the Bill received widespread support from most stakeholders, including councils, breeders, pet industry groups, the Australian Veterinary Association, breeder associations such as purebred dog and cat breeding associations, and working livestock dog groups. Plus, a survey done during the 10-week consultation period showed over 85% of the public were supportive of the changes.

"Pet owners can still keep their microchips details stored on another registry, we have no intention of stopping that," he said.

"The first version of Dogs and Cats Online won't have the functionality of sharing data with other private-sector microchip registries, partly because of privacy issues. As a government body, we have strict rules preventing the disclosure of personal information."

Pet Address will tell you that a dog or cat's microchip details are recorded in any other database within the Pet Address network.

"We'd like to explore those sorts of arrangements for future versions of Dogs and Cats Online," said Mr Lamb. "Unfortunately, there are some microchip databases not in the Pet Address network and that's why we decided to have a compulsory database in South Australia, bringing together all of the information."

Dogs and Cats Online will be a central location for all dog registration payments, dog and cat microchipping details,

desexing assistance animals, racing greyhounds and registered breeder information. It will permanently connect animals with their breeder or seller so that if the owner cannot be found, Dogs and Cats Online will enable authorities to contact the breeder or seller of the pet, explained Mr Lamb.

"Dogs and Cats Online will also record more information about the circumstances leading to dog attacks. This will help us make better decisions about preventing dog attacks," he said. Also, information about dog control orders and dog attack incidents will stay with the dog, even if the owner moves to a new council area, he added.

"All the information about dog and cat management will for the first time be stored together on one database, which will make it a valuable tool for insuring compliance with the new laws. Our system has been designed with the input of all key stakeholders and we believe it to be the best dog and cat management tool in Australia. We encourage other states and territories to join or integrate with Dogs and Cats Online," said Mr Lamb.

If other states and territories join the South Australian Dogs and Cats Online, would the state microchip registration system muddy the waters or would it help create the national database that many pet industry groups prefer?

Not everyone agrees about where pets should be registered, but they all say we need to all work together to bridge the gap between implanting microchips and getting pets registered. The ultimate goal is to get our lost pets safely and quickly back home, where they belong.

It really is a team effort - the breeder, the owner, the veterinarian, the council, the registries - it's everybody's responsibility. After all, we know pets like going on holidays, too!

COMPULSORY MICROCHIP LEGISLATION

ACT	Yes for dogs and cats	TAS	Yes for dogs and cats
NSW	Yes for dogs and cats	VIC	Yes (as a condition of
NT	No		registration) for dogs
QLD	Yes for dogs and cats		and cats
SA	Yes (as of 1 July 2018)	WA	Yes for dogs and cats
	for dogs and cats	SOURCE: RS	SPCA AUSTRALIA (FEB 2018)

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S PLAN FOR THE BIOCONTROL OF THE COMMON CARP PRESENTS SEVERAL RISKS

Scientists are calling on the Australian authorities to review their decision to introduce the carp herpes virus as a way to combat the common carp having colonized the country's rivers. They not only believe that this measure will be ineffective but that it also represents a risk to ecosystems.

Belgian, English and Australian scientists are calling on the Australian authorities to review their decision to introduce the carp herpes virus as a way to combat the common carp having colonised the country's rivers. In a letter published in the journal Science, they not only believe that this measure will be ineffective but that it also represents a risk to ecosystems.

On a global scale, the common carp (Cyprinus carpio) is one of the most important fish species in fish farming. Its annual production ranges between 4 and 5 million tonnes. Initially introduced to Australia for production in fish farms, the species has gradually colonised the rivers to the point of dominating the indigenous species. One of the methods proposed by the Australian government to reduce the number of carp is to release a virus which is deadly to this species, the cyprinid herpesvirus 3 (CyHV-3, also called the Koi herpesvirus or KHV) in rivers.

However, scientists note that data currently available on the carp's

biology, the pathogeny of the virus and the ecology of Australian rivers suggests that this tactic will not be effective and could even represent a risk to ecosystems.

Before the large-scale release of the CyHV-3, which will be costly (the plan proposed has a budget of 18 million Dollars) and irreversible, assessments must be carried out on the virus' actual capacity to sustainably reduce Australian carp populations living freely without harming the indigenous ecosystems. The authors advocate for the introduction of limited testing to safely assess if the virus can effectively control carp populations without harming ecosystems. The opinion of the scientists is notably based on work carried out for over a decade by Professor Alain Vanderplasschen from the Immunology and Vaccination Laboratory at the University of Liège who is behind the development of the first vaccine against CyHV-3.

"The discovery in our laboratory of the beneficial role of the behavioural fever expressed by carp as well as other recent results indicate that the Australian government's biocontrol plan will not meet its objectives. This may even cause serious damage to the ecosystems," explains Professor Alain Vanderplasschen.

STORY SOURCE: MATERIALS PROVIDED BY UNIVERSITY OF LIEGE DATE: FEBRUARY 22, 2018



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REPRIEVE FOR INDIAN ORNAMENTAL AQUATIC SECTOR

"In exercise of the powers conferred by section 38 or the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 (59 of 1960), except as respects things done or omitted to be done before such withdrawals, the Central Government, hereby withdraws the notification number G.S.R. 493 (E), dated the 23rd May, 2017 of the Government of India in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change." Many ornamental fish traders live below the poverty line – they cannot afford to register or maintain the strict standards which are unrealistic in their circumstances

Notification G.S.R. 493 (E) is the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Aquarium and Fish Tank Animals Shop) Rules 2017, which was on the verge of crippling the Indian ornamental aquatic industry a few months ago. Thus, in just one paragraph, the Indian authorities reversed their decision taken last May to "revolutionize" the nation's ornamental aquatic sector in a way that would lead to its collapse.

Regular readers of this column will be aware that I frequently refer to the value of, and need for, commonsense in matters relating to legislation, as well as of my frustration when this valuable and essential criterion is swept aside without rhyme or reason. Consequently, it is with considerable pleasure that I can report that commonsense has prevailed. However, don't let's kid ourselves that this turnaround has come about because government ministers have had the good sense to reflect on their earlier decision without any prompting. Far from it!

The fact is that, as soon as the original Notification was issued last May, both India's national trade sector, as well as the international ornamental aquatic community, were mobilized in a global effort to attempt to get the unjust and unwarranted requirements of the new law reversed, or, at least, reviewed and revised. So the decision didn't just happen; it was prompted by such a widespread outcry that the authorities had little option but to reconsider their earlier decision.

I won't go over all the controversial issues contained in the original Notification again here. I would, however, direct interested readers to my article of a few months ago in which I discussed the most relevant aspects of the new law. I also provided links to the full text of the Notification, and to a rather misguided article which appears to have had considerable influence on proceedings. I would also like to highlight one or two things which have probably influenced the latest U-turn. For instance, in referring to the registration fee of RS 5,000 which each trader had to pay, Patit Paban Haldar, a member of the West Bengal Ornamental Fish Association, had this to say: "Many ornamental fish traders live below the poverty line – they cannot afford to register or maintain the strict standards which are unrealistic in their circumstances".

Therefore, even if all the other requirements of the Notification had been reasonable and acceptable (which they were not), the mere fact that a significant number of traders would not have been able to afford the registration fee, with or without the added economic burden presented by the numerous other demands, would have meant the closure of an important part of the sector, with all the accompanying social and economic problems that this would present for many local communities.

Then, of course, even those who could have managed the fee would have had many other demands to comply with. One of these was the banning of bowls and tanks holding less than 4.55 litres of water for every inch of fish. The implications of this ruling would have been unbearable for many traders who would have had to dispose of all those tanks which didn't meet this criterion, with all the added replacement expense that this would involve.

The fact is that not all fish require the same volume of water per inch. As I asked in my original article: "Is one inch of guppy the same as one inch of pleco?" The problem for those involved in marine fish and invertebrates would, obviously, have been even more serious. So, even traders who could have afforded the registration fee could have been driven out of business.

I am just scratching the surface here, of course, since many other factors

will have influenced the new decision, not just these. Particularly influential will have undoubtedly been the representations from official agencies, such as various State Governments, to Central Government.

At the end of the day, though, the important thing is that the Indian ornamental aquatic sector has been brought back from the brink of extinction. We must therefore commend the Indian Central Government for having the courage to listen and take this major step. Don't let's forget, however, that those concerned are still the same people who bowed to anti-trade pressure and proceeded with the ban without consulting anyone, other than the anti-trade campaigners. Could they therefore change their mind again if a new anti-trade attack were to be launched? Let's hope not!



TRADING IN MARINES WOULD HAVE BECOME A TOTAL IMPOSSIBILITY FOR MANY BUSINESSES HAD THE ORIGINAL NOTIFICATION BEEN ENFORCED. **PHOTO: JOHN DAWES**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Dr. Mini Sekharan, Assistant Professor, School of Industrial Fisheries, Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT), Cochin, Kerala, India, for keeping me updated on this matter.

2018 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Global Pet Expo – USA

21st to 23rd March 2018 Orlando, Florida www.globalpetexpo.org/index.html

International Pet Industry Fair 2018(CPF2018) - China 4th Guangzhou International Aquarium Show (GIAS2018) - China

23rd to 25th March 2018 Guangzhou International Sourcing Center, Guangzhou, China CPF2018: www.chinapetfair.com/index.php?lang=en GIAS2018: www.fishgz.com/index.php?lang=en

Interpet, Asia Pacific - Japan

29th March to 1st April 2018 Tokyo Big Sight, East Hall 1, 2, 3 www.interpets.jp

Sydney Royal Grooming Competition - Australia

2nd to 3rd April 2018 Sydney Olympic Park Homebush Australia www.piaa.net.au/event/sydney-royal-grooming-competition/

Interzoo 2018 - Germany

8th to 11th May 2018 Nürnberg Messe, Nürnberg, Germany www.interzoo.com

AusGroom 2018 - Australia

16th to 17th June 2018 Hawkesbury Racecourse Clarendon Sydney, Australia www.piaa.net.au/event/ausgroom-2018-june-16-17-groomingcompetitions-june-18-19-seminars-workshops/

SuperZoo 2018 – USA

26th to 28th June 2018 Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas. NV USA www.superzoo.org

AusBoard 2018 - Australia

20th to 22nd August 2018 Mercure Hunter Valley Gardens Resort, 2090 Broke Road Pokolbin, Australia www. piaa.net.au/event/ausboard-2018/

Aquarama 2018 – China

22nd to 25th August 2018 Shanghai New International Expo Centre, Shanghai, China www.aquarama.com.cn

Pet Fair Asia 2018 - China

22nd to 26th August 2018 Shanghai New International Expo Centre, Shanghai, China www.petfairasia.com

Aqua Terra Show – Ukraine

31st August to 2nd September 2018 Exhibition Centre ACCO International, 40-b Peremoga Ave Kyiv, Ukraine www.aquaterrashow.com.ua/en/

Zoomark International in Russia

19th to 21st September 2018 Sokolniki Congress and Exhibition Center in Moscow www.zoomark.it/

CIPS – China

27th to 30th September 2018 China Import & Export Fair Complex Guangzhou www.en.cipscom.com

AusPet 2018 – Trade & Public Event - Australia

19th to 21st October 2018 Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre, 2684 2690 Gold Coast Highway, Broadbeach, QLD 4218 Australia www.piaa.net.au/event/auspet-2018/

IIPTF India International Pet Trade Fair – India

November 2018 NSIC Exhibition Center, New Delhi. India www.iiptf.com

2020

Interzoo 2020 - Germany

19th to 22th May 2020 Nürnberg Messe, Nürnberg, Germany www.interzoo.com

DISCLAIMER - please note: the information contained in this section is based on information provided by various event organisers and is as correct as possible at the time of going to print. Responsibility for the accuracy of the information or content of information sources lies with event organisers. PIN accepts no liability for incorrect information published in this Calendar of Events.



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FOR A FEW WEEKS, FLII'S RAMSAR NOMINATION FOR ITS REEFS SPELT GREAT DANGER FOR THE ISLAND NATION'S SUSTAINABLE LIVE CORAL AND LIVE ROCK SECTOR. PHOTO: CREATIVE COMMONS

FIJI'S CORALS BACK IN TRADE

2018, the International Year of the Reef, kicked off with a bang for Fiji – a really loud one! To celebrate the launch of this important 'Year', Fiji's Prime Minister, Frank Bainimarama, nominated large sections of Fiji's Great Sea Reef as a Ramsar site to protect it from a range of threats, including industry. Ramsar, the Convention on Wetlands, is an intergovernmental treaty that "provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources." While most such wetlands are represented by inland waters, i.e. swamps, rivers, etc., the interpretation of the term is so wide that it also takes in coastal habitats, be they mangroves or reefs.

PM Bainimarama's decision would seem to have been a reason for widespread rejoicing on the part of all those of us who take the conservation of our planet's natural resources seriously. So... why didn't we all rejoice?

The main reason for our reservations was that sometime between Xmas and New Year's Eve, Fiji's Ministry of Fisheries and Forests unexpectedly announced that Fijian live coral and live rock exports were being banned with immediate effect. The industry was, understandably, stunned, not just by the announcement itself, but by the fact that it came without any consultation or forewarning, that it was made during what is the quietest period in the industry's calendar when most of us are enjoying a few days' hard-earned respite with our loved ones, that no 'period of grace' had been granted... and that such an important and far-reaching announcement had been made via Facebook.

It would have been unfair to have pronounced judgement on these points at the time without the benefit of an open exchange of correspondence, or a face-to-face conversation with those responsible for the decision, thus allowing them the courtesy and opportunity to explain themselves, rather than allowing a less-thancomplimentary opinion of their actions to spread like wildfire throughout the international ornamental aquatic community. The thing is that when such unilateral actions are taken by authorities, it is easy to accuse those who take them of all manner of wrongdoing. Yet, it sometimes turns out that such situations arise, not from a desire or an intention to restrict any particular party's activities, but from a basic and unintended lack of understanding on the part of the legislators regarding some fundamental factors, or an unawareness of the unfortunate and unforeseen consequences of their decisions.

And so it's turned out to be with regard to this ban. I am therefore happy to report that, as I write these lines, the ban has been lifted by the Fijian authorities. This makes total sense, because, up to now, we had had very little in the form of clarification from the Ministry of Fisheries and Forests. There had been some sort of explanation for the ban from the Fisheries Minister, Semi Koroilavesau, which, while it may sound sensible at a superficial level, still left many matters unaddressed and unanswered. According to the Minister, "... the ban is based on the idea that a lot of the corals are dying... Our commitment also means protecting the coral system and maintaining a healthy ocean, and that's why we are doing it now... We need to protect our marine resources, and we will stay committed to it."

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This statement was made despite the fact that the largest exporting facility in Fiji, Walt Smith International (WSI), was actually established in 1996 following an invitation from the Ministry of Fisheries itself! This was followed by widespread national and international recognition for WSI's reef conservation activities, and numerous major awards, including the Fiji Export Council Unique Exporter Award in 2011. Further, the company appears to have received strong support from the Ministry's managers for about 20 years.

Added to this, since 1998, the WSIinspired/founded ADE Project (Aquaculture Development for the Environment - www.adeproject.org) has been funding training and capacity building efforts for local community reef restoration projects. Prominent among these is the replanting of coral reefs with coral frags cultivated for the export market. Interestingly, only a low percentage of the frags cultured for export (about 10%) can actually be exported, e.g. because they may have grown too large during the period of cultivation, with the remaining 90% being replanted on the reef itself. This results in more coral mass being restored to the wild than was originally removed as small frags for cultivation. So, the trade in corals from Fiji actually results in benefits for its reefs.

Therefore, rather than cause damage to Fiji's reefs, the ADE project is an excellent example of a win-win situation from which all parties benefit. Unfortunately, the ban put all the good work of the last 20 years in jeopardy, and within a few days of the announcement, WSI had to lay off three quarters of its workforce which, in turn, would have had knockon effects, probably even leading to the 'death' of the ADE project and all its conservation benefits for Fiji.

And we are not just talking of conservation benefits either. The fact is that Fiji's coral/live rock industry generates millions of dollars for the economy, as well as provide jobs for large numbers of locals who would become jobless, with all the socio-economic problems that this would begin causing in the near future. The government's decision, thus, defied all logic, while the above-quoted pronouncement from the Ministry regarding its reasons, seemed to lack coherence and sense.

Obviously, WSI did not take the matter lightly. It immediately began holding talks with Ministry representatives and invited them to visit WSI's premises to see for themselves how efficiently and conservation-friendly the operation really is, and how much revenue it generates for the nation's coffers and its workforce. Quite clearly, WSI's prompt actions, allied to the support that it received from the industry, including letters to the Fijian authorities from - among others - Dr Bruce Carlson of the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (who, themselves, are currently involved in a serious and uncalled-for battle regarding the state's own fishery), proved fruitful, with the result that the authorities were open-minded and 'big' enough to accept their unfortunate faux pas and acted immediately to reverse their decision.

They, quite simply, didn't have all the relevant information at their disposal when they decided to issue the ban. Indeed, they had thought that, while banning live coral and live rock exports, there was still a viable alternative for the Fijian sector: the export of aquacultured and/or captive-bred equivalents and man-made live rock. Again, this may not sound too unreasonable at first sight, or to the uninformed, but it is. For a start, cultured corals begin with frags collected from the wild, so this practice would have had to cease. Then, man-made alternatives account for only 20% of all export trade. And if this were not enough, we are nowhere near being able to 'breed' corals in captivity. So, whichever way we

look at it, the Fiji industry would have been dealt a major, unwarranted and potentially terminal blow by the ban.

While live coral and live rock exports have been given the green light once again, we are not out of the woods yet. As you will see from the text of the Ministry's original announcement which I include below, Point No. 2 states that live coral and live rock would be given a "zero quota for 2018" under the ban. This, of course, will not be the case now. However, the Fijian Department of the Environment will have to hold a CITES Management Authority (MA) meeting to establish these quotas, something that could take months. We can only hope that, when they do, they don't commit another major error and end up allocating unworkable quotas that will do little or nothing to restore Fiji's universally respected and flourishing industry.

MINISTRY'S FULL ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Fisheries has banned all harvesting, purchasing, sales and export of live coral and aquarium rock (also known as live rock, coral rock or fossil coral) from the 28th of December, 2017. All companies are to adhere to the following:

- All harvesting, purchasing and sales of live rocks and live coral are now banned, and no export permits would be processed by the ministry.
- 2. The Convention in International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Scientific Committee (SC) will be submitting to the Management Authority (MA) on 7th January 2018 that Live Coral and Live Rock is given a zero quota for 2018.
- **3.** The Ministry of Fisheries and both the CITES MA and SC would be supporting the development of other sustainable options, particularly the development of farmed or cultured coral.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Walt Smith (www.waltsmith.com) for his attentive and valuable responses to my requests for information.

FURTHER READING

For rapid online reporting on this issue, please consult: www.reef2rainforest. com/2018/01/05/flabbergasted-in-fijicoral-live-rock-exports-in-limbo-for-2018/ **INNOVATION AWARD**

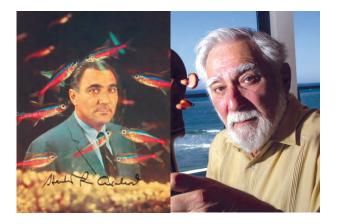
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OBITUARY HERBERT R AXELROD THE KING OF

AQUARIUM FISHES

Herbert R Axelrod passed away in his Swiss home - aged 89 years in May 2017. He led an amazing life, and was **a legend in the aquatic** world since the early 1960's being the foremost authority on tropical fish in our lifetime.

His knowledge of aquarium fish had him befriend many famous people over the years including Emperor Hirohita of Japan, Winston Churchill and King Leopold II of Belgium.

I got to know Herb in the mid 1960's when I was collecting marine fish in New Guinea, and authored a number of articles for his Tropical Fish Hobbyist magazine on native New Guinea species and fish collecting. He offered me the opportunity to come to the USA and work with the head breeder at his commercial fish farm – Gulf Fish Farms in Palmetto - Florida, at that time the world's largest tropical fish farm. I spent a year of my life there – and as you can imagine for a fish mad 20 year old, it was some experience. At the time I was there the farm was turning out over 10's of millions of fish and importing 100's of millions a year. Breeding concentrated on egg laying cichlids, egg scatterers like the Tetras and Danio's and nest builders like Betta's and Gourami's.

Despite authoring dozens of major books on tropical fishes, his interest also ran to classical music – being patron of the New Jersey Philharmonic Orchestra and owner of several Stradivarius violins over the years. He spoke 7 languages was considered a world authority on fly fishing, pigeon breeding and was an expert golfer. It was said that as a 10-year-old he swam the 15 miles across Lake Ontario. He was the world's leading aquatic photographer, owning a collection of over 10,000 fish species photos taken by himself.

But it was in the world of fish that he became famous. It was said he could recognize over 7000 fish species at sight, he led over 40 expeditions into remote areas of the globe seeking new species, discovering hundreds that had been lost to science for many years. More than two dozen species were named after him – the most famous of all being the Cardinal Tetra (Cheirodon Axelrodi), which he claimed he discovered with the help of a priest in the upper reaches of the Amazon River. His TFH Publications not only published hundreds of books on fish, but also on all types of pets as the years went on.

His most famous book "Tropical Aquarium Fishes "sold over 450,000 copies.

He also teamed up with some of the world's other great tropical fish experts , including my good friend Professor Cliff Emmen's , Head of Veterinary Science at Sydney University and author of "How to keep and Breed Tropical Fish" , to write many co-authored books over the years.

After he sold the TFH company for \$ 70 Million dollars – he planned to continue fish search for new species and become a philanthropist. He was awarded citizenship of Austria due to his donations to museums in Vienna, and the president of Brazil, Humberto Castelo Branco asked Axelrod to draw up a conservation plan for the Amazon basin. He became a major donator to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C. over the years.

Despite a life that became difficult in later years – his legend in the aquarium world will never be surpassed. He was loved and loathed by his peers in the aquarium industry – making as many enemies as he did friends. His many books were criticized by many for being short of the correct information – not a surprise when on one occasion to please a publisher he churned out a 300 page book on tropical fishes in 36 hours. However, he was widely regarded as the world's best and most prolific photographer of tropical fish species – and many of his images have been used universally in reference and text books.

He will long be remembered – I found him to be impatient, impulsive and not to tolerate fools lightly. He once refused to meet Jacques Cousteau because he considered him to be a bore. He could be a great friend and a bad enemy – suing many and being sued as well on hundreds of occasions.

Frank Williams

WHAT'S NEW



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with Coconut Oil, Lamb & Kangaroo Stew and Lamb & Sardine Stew. Each 400g can has been formulated with Veterinarians and Animal Nutritionists to be complete and balanced food, suitable for daily feeding for all adult dog breeds.

3. INTRODUCING BILLY + MARGOT BY MARIE JONES. NUTRITIONIST. DOG LOVER

Marie has created an array of unique recipes with carefully selected ingredients, each of them packed with protein and superfoods to fuel and nourish dogs to live their best life.

The range has been crafted around the Circle of Nutrition a flexible nutritional approach that facilitates pet parents to explore different taste, textures and formats including Dry, Wet, Treats and Chilled/Frozen. Explore the range today. www.billyandmargot.com.au

IVORY COAT

For more information contact lvory Coat on 1800 732 573 or email: info@ivorycoat.com.au

NEW INNOVATIVE IN-SUMP PROTEIN SKIMMERS FROM DELTEC

Introducing the new Deltec 600i 24VDC and 600ix 240V protein skimmers, suitable for aquariums from 200 up to 600 liters.



The new skimmer models come with some great safety features. Should the water level in the sump suddenly exceed the maximum depth for the skimmer, or the air feed becomes blocked, the new emergency overflow system prevents the collection cup from overflowing. As the water level rises within the protein skimmer the air feed to the pump will shut off automatically via the emergency overflow further reducing the chance of foam flooding the skimmer cup. The base is a new hollow design where the water flows through to the level adjustment and indicator tubes. This new design feature means that water will exit the protein skimmer body from the lowest point greatly reducing the chance of micro bubbles escaping the body, increasing air- water contact time and also reducing noise and turbulence within the protein skimmer body.

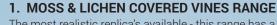
Removing the pump for cleaning and maintenance can be achieved in 20 seconds, making keeping the skimmer running at optimal efficiency a breeze.

With the body of the skimmer being a cylinder and not tapering, all the small air bubbles can rise unhindered, fully saturated and will only burst in the foam pot riser, adding to the efficiency and performance of the Deltec skimmers. Available now at ABS Technologies

ABS Technologies

For more information contact ABS Technologies on (08) 8398 5560 or enquiries@abs-technologies.com.au

WHAT'S NEW



The most realistic replica's available - this range has a rough bark like surface and a selection of various ferns, moss and lichen attachments. Bend to any design to suit all terrarium types and sizes.

2. ABSOLUTE HOLISTIC - JERKY STYLE DOG FOOD AND TREATS - N.Z.

A dog food aimed at the top end of the dog food market. This jerky style texture food has a 93% meat content - is Air Dried and a 100% Natural Diet for all life stages. Available in Blue Mackeral & Lamb, Chicken & Hoki and Beef & Venison - all made in New Zealand. Available in 1 Kilo bags and as a treat range in 100gm under the names Red Meat, Grand Prairie and Ocean & Farm.

3. FURKIDZ "CARNIVAL" DOG TOYS RANGE

The ultimate in fun toys for dogs. Coming in two ranges all in Harlequin colours - one with action wings, fins and tails. Available In Owl, Turkey, Fish, Dog, Duck, Seahorse, Parrot and Gecko.

4. MILAN'S PAPER PELLET LITTER FOR CATS

Packed in a very attractive bag design - Millan's is a 100% plain paper pellet preventing the risk of printer ink poisoning in paws. The tight pellets ensure maximum absorption and are available in 10 ltr and 24 ltr bags.

5. FURKIDZ - PREMIUM CAT FURNITURE RANGE

The ultimate in modern classy cat furniture. Featuring polished timber, soft cushions and superior scratching posts - this range goes together easily with good quality components. Priced very well for volume sales.

6. ABSORB PLUS GIANT PET WIPES - IN ANTI BACTERIAL AND CHARCOAL 20 X 15CM

A new range of super size pet wipes. In the Anti Bacterial range in the scents Aloe Vera , Floral & Peppermint and in the Charcoal range in Baby Powder, Coconut & Lemon.

7. JUTE ROPE BIRD RINGS

Following some issues regarding cotton items with parrots this is a jute range of parrot rings which content of can be chewed by birds without risk of bill or craw clogging. Coming in a variety of sizes and multiples - these rings can be easily attached to any cage.

8. SUMO - AMPHIBIOUS WATER PUMP RANGE

Super power in an economically priced range - SUMO features a total of 6 models pumping from 1200 litres per hour to 9500 Litres per hour. Ideal for water lifting in sumps, ponds or water features - suitable for both fresh and salt water use.









Pet Pacific

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PREMIUM PET FOODS THE MYTHS AND THE MISCONCEPTIONS!

The Premium Pet Food market is booming, hammering the past major suppliers in pet food retail – the supermarkets and other mass merchandisers. Fortunately, most of this business is now going to the independent pet retailer market.

A Packaged Facts survey in the USA in early 2017 showed that 79% of dog owners, and 63% of cat owners enjoy purchasing products that pamper their pets. It also showed that overall 79% were happy to pay a lot more for pet food products that make their pet healthier – and give it a happier and longer life span. In the nutrition area, " natural" remains the pathway to growth in sales, with many consumers believing the natural products rate higher than any other option, especially in pet specialty stores. There are many opinions on what makes a superior pet food – here are some thoughts in a summary of expert opinions from Australia and around the globe.

GRAIN or GRAIN FREE

Trends come and go in pet foods, right now Grain Free is the flavour of the month.

However, there is absolutely no science to say that a grain free diet is better than a grain diet, and without research to support grain free, retailers need to be cautious with their approach to recommending these diets.

It is common knowledge that some dogs can get an allergic reaction to some grains – the main offenders being wheat, corn and soy. This allergy occurs principally when these grains are used as a protein source, eg corn gluten meal, soy bean meal, vegetable protein isolate etc. Beware of foods that include these ingredients.

However, some grains are actually very beneficial without giving rise to these concerns. Rice or in particular Brown Rice, is a great addition to an otherwise grain free food as advised by the

independent www.petfoodreviews.com.au website which is quoted as saying "Brown Rice is high in Fibre and Nutrients, and will provide your dog with a slow burning source of energy. Brown rice has the other upside of not being a source of any allergies, which is the case with wheat which we find in many other foods, and so makes an excellent addition".

MEAT INGREDIENTS

The most important ingredient is of course meat – Chicken Meat being always the safest and best meat to include. Any worthwhile food should have a level of 30% or more in protein and up to 50% in meat meal top achieve this. Fat levels should ideally be around the 20% mark.

BEWARE OF SPLIT INGREDIENTS. With packaging rules demanding that the first listed product must be the one with the highest percentage in content – here is where a number of leading pet food makers play some tricks with the consumer. Splitting ingredients is an old trick, but one not commonly known about by the consumer. Wherever you see the same product mentioned twice in the ingredients list on a pet food bag – you can safely assume that is the item that has the highest content in that food.

There is NO nutritional benefit for splitting ingredients - it is generally done to allow another ingredient to move up the list and make the consumer think it is the number one ingredient.

For example in the case of one well-known brand we can see Raw Potato and further down Potato Powder- telling the story that there is more potato in that food than meat as a %. Not very honest, but it does happen in quite a lot in some well supported brands. Watch out also for the term chicken by products or meat by products – this can mean heads, feet and internal organs substituting for meat itself.

Real Chicken is another deceptive term – rather than being chicken meal which is 100% ground meat, Real Chicken is 70-80% water. This allows the producer to show Real (or Fresh) Chicken as the number 1 ingredient when in fact it is mostly water.

OTHER INGREDIENTS

The other most important factor in the making of a great pet

A Packaged Facts survey in the USA in early 2017 showed that 79% of dog owners, and 63% of cat owners enjoy purchasing products that pamper their pets

food are the other ingredients that make up the formula. Most important of these are items that provide good anti-oxidant levels and vitamins, and these come mostly from a combination of fruits and vegetables – Blueberries and other Berries, Broccoli, Beetroot, and any other of the green vegetable varieties. A good food will also have vitamins added – Vitamin C and E are the most important. These will support the pet's immune capacity and overall general health.

Egg forms an important binder and good health enhancer – and in any Senior or All Life Stages Formula – Glucosamine and Chondroitin should also be present. Where possible adding Omega 3 and 6 will add further benefits – Flaxseed Oils and Fish Oils will provide these.

LOCAL OR OVERSEAS MADE

Until quite recently, almost all pet foods considered Premium were made overseas in USA or Europe. More recently Australia has been catching up. The main issue with imported foods is Australia's tough import regulations on products containing meat. Cooking at much higher than optimum temperatures to meet DAFF demands, burns a lot of nutritional value out of imported foods, which of course still show those values on the bag as what they are when sold in their local market - before such extra heat treatment is applied. Long overseas trips often in hot containers, does nothing to help further. Reason why many of the market leaders when evaluated here – do not rate that highly in the quality stakes (see notes above on the local independent local ratings service www. petfoodreviews.com.au)

Australia now makes some of the best quality pet foods in the world, not only because of the before mentioned factors, but because of the freshness of using local produce and the speed in which it is brought to the market as well. There are a number of high quality local brands available now, several of the best of these being Ivory Coat, and XP3020. These have already been finding good overseas markets for their product. Ziwi Peak from New Zealand also a very good food, and is doing well internationally.

Sadly, the large volume of local made pet food sales are still done in the supermarkets. These locally made foods are cheap and made mostly by the overseas pet food giants. They are just the opposite of those other local brands mentioned above – and quality of ingredients is not at all a factor with most of these. Split ingredients, heavy use of wheat and corn, and the inclusion of animal by-products are all great for profits (even at low prices) – but certainly not for good animal health.

OTHER FACTORS

Age categories and kibble size is another area of debate. Of course many makers love to have more shelf space, and nothing does this better than having a Puppy, Small Breed, Medium Breed, Large Breed, Senior and some even go as far as to add further groups like Indoor Cat (don't almost all cats live indoors?).

The facts are that most of these foods will be the same or similar – although the Senior diet can create a windfall for the maker where less fat is required and often a reduction in some other energy activators, often at no price difference. A great food is a great food, and the really great foods will be excellent for all the

life stages of any pet. These "lifestage" foods are just an excuse to take up your precious shelf space and tie-up your money is stock. Kibble size is another factor, and many consumers get themselves convinced that the size of the dog should dictate the size of the kibble - this should not be the case. Dogs of all sizes from puppy to fully grown are far better consuming a small, smooth kibble size. The facts are that large kibble is often with rough edges and as most large dogs seldom chew, but swallow their food whole - large kibble can scratch, irritate and sometimes damage the mouth and oesophagus. Most importantly also is the smaller the kibble, the more powerful is the flavour and the dog's ability to digest quickly. Once again varying sizes of kibble becomes a marketing ploy, and a concern more of owners - rather than what is in the best interests of their pet. The facts are that in the case of most good quality dog food brands - you could feed their puppy size kibble through all life stages for great results, just varying the size of the portions to suit the size of the animal, its activity status - and its life stage at the time.

VETERINARY CHOICES

Unfortunately, some of the largest selling premium pet foods on our market, are a long way from being the best quality – although their pricing often would not indicate this fact. Of course, many pet owners will tend to be guided by what is recommended by their local veterinarian, when it comes to pet food choices. Most Vets will always recommend the several larger companies brands that include medical diets in their offering – which are exclusive to the Vet channel. Understandable, bearing this in mind.

Unfortunately, this does not always point the pet owner to the foods that are in their animal's best interests. This is because 95% of the time the food sold under these brands are the regular diet's (non-medical) - as it is in pet stores as well. A check on the above mentioned independent pet food reviews web site, shows that all three of these major vet brands are rated at the very bottom of the list in regards to quality – in fact only just above the supermarket brands. While there are some vet's well aware of this and will sell better quality food to many customer's, most will sell what they see as in their own best interest – not doing the pets involved any favours at all.

OVERVIEW

While it is obvious that most hungry pets will eat anything put in front of them – many pet owners may well see in their minds no reason to spend 3 times as much on a bag of food at premium price levels, than in the supermarket.

As a quality Retailer you have the responsibility to educate your customers of the benefit of feeding their pets a high quality food. The health benefits with fewer trips to the Vet, the longer life for their precious companion and the vitality their pet will show throughout its life are just some of the benefits the owner will see. This makes the premium food actually great value for money. YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT and so it is with your pet.

A happy and healthy animal is what we should all be looking for – and getting the word out about how important a quality premium pet food is to all animals, is in the best interests of the owner, the animal - and of course to our independent pet trade at the cash register.

THE PET INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION NEW ZEALAND AND RETAIL NZ

The Pet Industry Association of New Zealand (PIA) is a specialist group within Retail NZ. The We aim to monitor all regulation relevant to the industry, and be proactive in advocating on behalf of the pet industry on a variety of issues.

Maintaining a relationship with MPI, breaking down the barriers to pet ownership, reducing the high cost of accepting card payments, retail crime, sustainability, and maintaining a level playing field for all New Zealand retailers are our top priorities for the pet industry.

What is currently happening at the PIA and Retail NZ?

We are so excited to have recently launched a series of retail-focused workshops in around the country, designed to bring retailers the best practice advice and techniques, to help your business thrive in today's retail environment. These workshops will focus on retail planning and strategy, product and merchandising, and successful selling while knowing legal obligations. Sue Smith, a successful retail leader and previous Kmart NZ Managing Director and Lorraine Rouse both have extensive experiences and knowledge in the retail sector, and will be leading these workshops to help Kiwi retailers excel in the challenging retail environment. We are hoping to hold pet-specific events later in the year.

What else do you do?

Our Advice Service, specialises in HR issues and is there to guide retailers, give advice on an array of business practices, and are there if you want to just check in that you're on the right track. Our Advisers are well equipped with a number of handy resources and have a great wealth of knowledge about the ins and outs of people management and retail business operations.

We want to hear from you!

The PIA is the collective voice for New Zealand's pet retailing and wholesaling industries. We provide the opportunity for members to have their say on issues affecting their livelihoods, and to benefit from resources and knowledge that contribute to their efficiency and profitability.

Membership is open to any New Zealand based company, or overseas company represented in New Zealand, involved in the retailing and wholesaling of pet related products and services, so get in touch and let us help you make your business even better!



For more details, email emily.duncan@retail.kiwi, or call us on 0800 472 472 (1800 128 086 from Australia). And visit our website to learn further about our Advice Service, Retail Workshops, the PIA and more! www.retail.kiwi

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2. TROPI PARROT STICK [KS176]

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Pet Industry Association

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THE PET INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA - MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRY

To: Member Liaison The Pet Industry Association of Australia (PIAA), PO Box 7108 Baulkham Hills Business Centre NSW 2153 Pet Industry Association Phone: 02 9659 5811 Fax: 02 9659 5822 Email: info@piaa.net.au Web: www.piaa.net.au Please send me a Membership Kit. My Business is in Pet -Retail Grooming Boarding Suppliers Pet Services Student Pet Sitter Trainer Pet Day Care Manufacturer Breeder

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CEO REPORT MARK FRASER

The annual PIAA Pet Expo has been running for more than 20 years. The showcase event was originally designed to allow suppliers and manufacturers to connect with independent retailers, air new products and offer special Expo deals.

Over the years, the retail sector has seen corporate groups become more the norm, whilst the independent retailer numbers have continued to decline. Due to this shift, there has been a noticeable drop in attendees at the annual PIAA Pet Expo.

In 2016, as part of the PIAA strategic plan to focus on education, the expo became more of a conference scenario, with multiple education streams over two days, along with a two day tradeshow.

In 2017, the Expo was renamed Auspet, with an increased focus on the education side of things. Conference numbers were pleasing but the trade numbers continued to decline.

In 2018, we will be attempting to address this decline by completely turning Auspet on its head.

This October, Auspet 2018 will head to the Gold Coast, with the new format of a one day industry trade show and conference, and two days of public expo. The public days are a new foray for PIAA and will offer education and information along with entertainment and interactive opportunities. The public days will include displays and activities around reptiles, aquatics, birds, cats, dogs and more.

This is a great opportunity for not only industry to connect with consumers, but also the perfect scenario for PIAA to grow our brand awareness amongst the general public.

We are very excited about the new direction and we look forward to having strong industry backing for this new initiative.

If you have contemplated exhibiting at, or sponsoring Auspet in the past, then now is the time to get on board and show your support for your association. We are the voice of the industry, but we are only as loud as the support of our members and the industry at large enables us to be.

I look forward to your support and seeing you on the Gold Coast in October. Full details are elsewhere in this issue or at auspet.net.au PIAA PRESENTS AUSPET 2018 EXHIBITOR & SPONSORSHIP PROSPECTUS NOW AVAILABLE!

The PIAA are excited to release the exhibitor & sponsorship prospectus, floor plans & exhibitor application for PIAA presents AusPet 2018.

In 2018 with the addition of two public days, we feel we are offering our exhibitors the exposure to both trade & consumer buyers. Even if you are a business that sells to trade only, do not discount the branding opportunity this event will offer you. The event will be extensively promoted through print, radio, TV & social media along with our ambassadors.

AusPet 2018 will be located at the Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre from October 19-21 and will feature:

- 1 day trade show (Friday October 19) and 2 day public pet expo (Saturday October 20 & Sunday October 21)
- Steve De Mamiel Keynote Presentation 'Sales & Marketing for the New Breed of Buyers'
- 1 day Aquatics, Avian, Reptile & Business Conference program
- AusPet grooming competitions
- AusPet Industry Dinner and awards presentation
 (Saturday October 20)
- Education stage
- Outdoor dog sports arena featuring agility and disc dogs
- Why should you exhibit at PIAA presents AusPet 2018?
- Drive sales and grow brand awareness
- Market to your target audience
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