



St Helena  
Government

VETERINARY SECTION

## Importing Pet Animal Species from South Africa (excluding Dogs & Cats) GUIDANCE NOTES

### LEGAL BASIS

The importation of pet animal species, such as hamsters and guinea pigs, is not prohibited but it is controlled. Under the Animal (Diseases) Ordinance 1944 Cap 96 (as amended) all animals imported into St Helena require a licence, and – apart from dogs and cats from the UK - are subject to a period of quarantine.

This sheet provides guidance for pet animal species imported from South Africa and does not cover livestock or dogs and cats. There is separate guidance available for ornamental fish.

### WHICH ANIMALS CAN BE IMPORTED?

- The range of pet species is very diverse now, and could include anything from insects and reptiles to small mammals.
- The first task is to contact the Veterinary Authority at ANRD, Scotland (tel: 24724), to obtain a licence application form. This is also the opportunity to discuss the choice of pet with the Senior Veterinary Officer.
- Before issuing any licence to import, the Senior Veterinary Officer will consider the type of animal. The decision of whether or not to grant a licence is based entirely on an evaluation of the likely harm that species could cause to the island in the event of escape or the likelihood of it carrying disease or parasites unnoticed.
- The licence must be applied for in adequate time before boarding ship, so that a full assessment can be made, otherwise the licence may be refused.
- The licence attracts a small fee.
- Arrangements must also be made with the shipping agents, Solomons PLC, well beforehand, as special conditions for transportation may be required.
- The following lists act as guidance for which species are likely to be refused or accepted. Species not listed will be fully assessed prior to making a decision:

#### *Prohibited by law:*

Parrots  
Monkeys

#### *Acceptable:*

Guinea pigs  
Hamsters

#### *Likely to be refused:*

Insects  
Birds  
Rats  
Mice  
Ferrets  
Snakes

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**Agriculture and Natural Resources Division**

Scotland, St Paul's, St Helena Island.

Telephone: 00 (290) 24724, Facsimile: 00 (290) 24603, Email: [joe-hollins@enrd.gov.sh](mailto:joe-hollins@enrd.gov.sh)



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### SELECTING YOUR PET:

Select your pet carefully, and consider all the factors:

- Is this a standard pet species (eg: hamsters)?
- For children, will it be child friendly (the Senior Veterinary Officer is happy to advise on this)?
- Can you provide the right living conditions for the animal's needs?
- Can you get the correct diet on the island?
- Is the source reputable? Only go to established identifiable retailers.
- Does the animal look healthy and well cared for?
- Is it captive bred or wild caught? The sale of wild caught animals as pets is to be discouraged and a licence will not be issued except in exceptional circumstances.

### IMPORTATION PROCEDURE:

All imported animals are checked aboard ship before they are allowed to land on St Helena. Be aware that the landing of the animal may still be refused. There are several circumstances where this may arise, such as:

- Missing paperwork, for example no licence issued;
- Incorrect paperwork, for example too few animals applied for, or wrong species listed;
- Evidence of disease.

The animal may be returned, humanely euthanased or in the case of disease, possibly admitted into quarantine and treated, depending on the condition. Under law, any expense is carried by the importer.

### QUARANTINE:

All animals imported from South Africa are subject to a period of quarantine of between 1 and 6 months, at the discretion of the Senior Veterinary Officer. This can usually take place in the importer's place of residence.

### YOUR CHECKLIST:

- Does the shop look reputable and well kept?
- Can the supplier give you some assurances that his stock is healthy?
- Does the animal appear OK? Are there wounds or injuries, scales or scabs? Is the coat/skin healthy? Does the animal look bright and alert? Is it friendly and easy to handle?
- Have you got the right equipment and feed to keep it?
- Have you filled in your application form for a licence to import?
- Have you applied for sufficient numbers? If there are fewer animals than on the licence, there is no problem, but if there are more, they may be refused.
- Have you received a licence to import?

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