

Biosecurity Measures Save High-End Fish From Disease

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Posted: December 18, 2007

Losing livestock to disease never helps a retailer's bottom line. Losing high-end fish because of infectious disease, however, is even more of a financial loss.

Retailers with fish of varying price tags must know about biosecurity measures they can take to prevent the outbreak and spread of disease, said Spike Cover, director of Associated Koi Clubs of America in Mission Viejo, Calif. Designate a distinct quarantine area.

"All new koi should be housed for observation and appropriate testing until its safe to transfer them to the display area," Cover said. Limit access to this area.

Provide a hospital area for fish that need medication or further treatment. "This area must be separate from the quarantine area," Cover said. Maintain separate equipment for this area.

Keep the food storage and supply areas in a separate location to help prevent and control disease transmission. "Access to the food storage and supply area should not be through a quarantine, hospital or boarding area," Cover said.

If the store contains a koi boarding facility, treat it like a quarantine area and keep those koi separate from other fish in the facility.

"The fish [in the boarding area] must be considered potential carriers of pathogens, including koi herpes virus, and treated as if they were in quarantine," Cover said.

Provide display tanks to house all fish that passed through quarantine and are ready for resale, Cover said. These fish will have no evidence of infectious disease after appropriate testing.

Use signage to designate the different restricted areas and prevent accidental contamination.

Use a veterinarian to oversee the store's biosecurity measures.

Train all personnel about the facility's preventative health practices to reduce confusion.