

WHAT REALLY HAPPENS IN QUARANTINE

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Pet bird population of the United States is estimated to be approximately 42 million. Approximately 600,000 to 700,000 birds are imported into the United States annually. Many of these birds are captive born in foreign countries.

2. Approximately 620,000 birds were legally imported into the U.S. in fiscal year 1983. summary of usda mortality rates is summarized below.

Received	803,873
Dead on arrival	40,054 (4.9%)
Died in quarantine	92,768 (12.1% of live arrivals)
Refused entry	9,303 (1.15%)

Released	614,782 (76%)

3. These mortality rates include all species of birds imported through commercial quarantine stations and are not representative of all lots of birds. The highest mortality rates are incurred in lots of finches which are imported in very large numbers.

II. HISTORY OF IMPORTATION SYSTEM

1. The first import ban was implemented in the 1930's due to the reportedly high incidence of human psittacosis associated with pet birds.

2. In 1968 a program was initiated to allow importation of birds which were treated with chlorotetracycline for 45 days in the country of origin.

3. All imports were banned in 1972 after imported birds were found to be introducing QVND into the U.S.

4. The current quarantine system was established in 1974. The system has been modified as needed since that time.

III. IMPORTATION PROCEDURES

1. A bond is posted to cover USDA charges (laboratory charges and USDA personell charges) and the quarantine station is outfitted, disinfected and sealed.

2. Import permits are obtained from the USDA.

3. Export permits and CITES (Congress on International Trade in Endangered Species) permits are obtained from the country of origin and export taxes are paid.

4. Birds are collected into holding facilities in the country of origin.

5. A health certificate must be obtained from a veterinarian in the country of origin.

6. Birds and documents are shipped by air to the designated port of entry, meet by Customs, USDI and USDA officials and escorted to the quarantine station.

7. Tissue samples and swabs are shipped to National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames Iowa for the detection of Newcastle Disease Virus and poultry lethal forms of Avian Influenza. Tissue samples are submitted from all dead birds (up to 100 per day) in the first 15 days. Brain, lung, spleen, trachea and colon are collected into brain heart infusion broth. Cloacal swabs are collected from up to 150 birds on the 7th day of quarantine.

8. The feeding of 1% chlorotetracycline is required but not enforced.

9. All psittacine birds must be identified by an approved leg band.

10. The quarantine period is 30 days.

11. Anyone entering the quarantine station during the quarantine period must shower in and shower out and must sign an affidavit stating that they will not come into contact with any birds for three days.

IV A summary of the lots of birds passing through 9 USDA approved commercial quarantine stations in 1983 will be presented. Major disease problems and mortality rates will be discussed and compared to national figures.

V. Discussion and conclusion will include some reflection on the past, present and future of bird importation.