



NOTICE TO THE WILDLIFE IMPORT/EXPORT COMMUNITY



June 11, 2003

Subject: Import and Export Prohibitions on Certain Rodents

Background:

On June 11th, the Department of Health and Human Services issued a notice of embargo on the importation of rodents from Africa until further notice due to the public health threat of monkeypox. This embargo applies to live and dead rodents imported for any purpose.

In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are prohibiting, until further notice, the transportation or offering for transportation in interstate commerce, or sale, offering for sale, or offering for other type of commercial activity or public distribution, including release into the environment, of prairie dogs (*Cynomys sp.*) and the following rodents from Africa: tree squirrels (*Heliosciurus sp.*); rope squirrels (*Funisciurus sp.*); dormice (*Graphiurus sp.*); Gambian giant pouched rats (*Cricetomys sp.*); brush-tailed porcupines (*Atherurus sp.*); and striped mice (*Hybomys sp.*). This prohibition includes export.

The prohibition does not apply to individuals who transport listed animals to veterinarians or animal control officers, or other entities under guidance or instructions issued by Federal, State, or local government authorities.

Action:

Effective June 11 2003, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service will prohibit the import of any rodents from Africa, whether alive or dead, for any purpose. In addition, the Service will prohibit the export of prairie dogs (*Cynomys sp.*) and the following African rodents: tree squirrels (*Heliosciurus sp.*); rope squirrels (*Funisciurus sp.*); dormice (*Graphiurus sp.*); Gambian giant pouched rats (*Cricetomys sp.*); brush-tailed porcupines (*Atherurus sp.*); and striped mice (*Hybomys sp.*).

Importers with shipments already en route to the United States should immediately contact any port of entry. For any recently imported shipments or any prairie dogs or African rodents of concern already in your possession, contact your State or local health department or the CDC Emergency Operations Center (770-488-7100). Further updates and information on monkeypox may be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/monkeypox>.

Contact:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Office of Law Enforcement
703-358-1949 703-358-2271 (fax)