



# STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Corning Tower

The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza

Albany, New York 12237

Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H.  
*Commissioner*

Dennis P. Whalen  
*Executive Deputy Commissioner*

June 13, 2003

Dear Pet Shop Owner/Animal Breeder/Kennel Operator:

You may be aware that a disease from Africa, monkeypox, that is in the same orthopoxvirus family as smallpox, has been introduced to the United States. This potentially fatal disease has been spread to humans by contact with infected rodents, primarily prairie dogs. We have attached New York State Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) fact sheets about monkeypox.

On June 11, two federal agencies issued a joint order (attached) banning all importation, sale, or movement of specific animals. Also attached are the federal register notice of the joint order and an interim Questions and Answers information sheet about the joint order. In issuing the order, the CDC is acting pursuant to 42 CFR 70.2 and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is acting pursuant to 21 CFR 1240.30 to take such actions as are necessary to prevent the interstate spread of disease. CDC is also exercising its authority under 42 CFR 71.32(b) to implement an immediate embargo on the importation of all rodents from Africa. The specific regulation pages are attached. The animals listed in the joint order include: prairie dogs, tree squirrels, rope squirrels, dormice, Gambian giant pouched rats, brush-tailed porcupines, and striped mice. In regard to importation, all African rodents have been banned. As of June 11, you and all others are subject to criminal penalty if you move or sell any of these species of animals.

For the time being, healthy individuals of any of the above animals currently housed on your premises should be kept separate from other species, not offered for sale to the public, not allowed to contact the public, or transferred to any other facility or home until further notice. Maintain the animals under the usual care, and observe them daily for any signs of illness.

If any of these animals develop signs of illness, you must notify your local health department immediately (phone numbers are on the bottom of the first page in most telephone directories, under "Rabies Information"). Depending on the illness, local, state, or federal authorities may require and authorize transport of the animal to a designated veterinarian for diagnosis. If the signs of illness are compatible with monkeypox, the animal will be humanely euthanized and tested at the New York State Department of Health's Wadsworth Center laboratory for the disease. At that time, you will also be given instructions for safe disposal of the animal's bedding.

Disposal of any healthy animals can only be done in consultation with your local health department. They must authorize euthanasia and incineration of the animals. No other disposal of the animals is permitted. Under no circumstances are you permitted to release the animals into the environment, doing so would violate the federal order and would make you subject to criminal penalty

You may keep updated on monkeypox at the websites of the New York State Department of Health (<http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/zoonoses/zoonoses.htm>) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/monkeypox/index.htm>). If you have any questions about monkeypox or the federal order, please contact your local health department or the NYSDOH Zoonoses Program (email to [zoonoses@health.state.ny.us](mailto:zoonoses@health.state.ny.us) or phone to 518-474-3186).

Sincerely,

Millicent Eidson, MA, DVM, DACVPM  
State Public Health Veterinarian and Director,  
Zoonoses Program

Attachments