

USDA INFORMS AFA THAT ANIMAL WELFARE ACT WILL NOW INCLUDE BIRDS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture/APHIS/Animal Care (USDA) has recently received a verbal legal opinion that, contrary to the initial understanding, the final language in the amended Animal Welfare Act (AWA) indicates that birds and certain rats and mice (except for those forms bred specifically for research) are required to be covered under the Act. Thus, at this time, USDA is planning to proceed with a Proposed Rulemaking which will describe the scope of licensing requirements, minimum standards requirements, inspections of facilities and who will be covered under this new law. Breeders, dealers, transporters, exhibitors, and carriers are all included at present, but how these terms will be defined is critical. Representatives of all these categories need to provide input to insure that reasonable definitions and regulations are developed.

The AWA is one of the most significant laws that has ever been passed in regard to U.S. aviculture. USDA is scheduled to make the first public presentation regarding the status of this Proposed Rulemaking as it may relate to aviculture to those attending the Annual Convention of the American Federation of Aviculture, Inc. (AFA). This Convention is being held at the Hyatt Regency at Tampa City Center, Tampa, Florida over 8-11 August 2002. This Convention provides an early venue for aviculturists and other affected parties to have an impact on the regulations that may result from the Act.

Dr. Chester Gibson, along with other USDA representatives, will make a formal presentation to AFA Convention attendees describing the status of this Proposed Rulemaking Friday, 9 August 2002. They will invite questions and comments at the end of their presentation. Further, they will also maintain a booth in the Exhibit Hall throughout the entire Convention in order to be able to provide additional information, answer questions and receive comments. We urge that you attend the AFA Convention and express your views. If you fall into any of the affected categories (breeder, dealer, etc.), it is critical to your operation and to the future of aviculture in the U.S. that your opinion be voiced. This is your chance to be heard early in the process and make a difference.

Benny J. Gallaway, Ph.D.
President
American Federation of Aviculture, Inc.®

[Editor's Note: The above message elicited much comment. Jerry Jennings has given permission to share some of his thoughts here. Jerry is the founding President of AFA, an attorney, and a very successful aviculturist. Some of his opinion is found below.]

From Jerry Jennings:

USDA has traditionally recognized the AFA as the voice of aviculture, since most bird groups belong to it. What USDA is doing at the upcoming AFA Convention is gathering our input for their proposed regulations, which will appear in the Federal Register for public comment – at which time the AR folks will bombard them with letters to make the regulations stricter, but at least we have the first salvo to fire.

As many people as possible, should attend this meeting. USDA is meeting with bird people FIRST, and the AFA convention is where they have chosen to do it. The more people that show up at the convention, the better we look. If there is a mere handful attending, then they will think we are 1) small, 2) unimportant politically, and 3) not worth listening to. This is a MUST ATTEND convention, even for those of us who do not seem to have the resources to go. **If we blow it, it probably will be the end of us.** ❖

Convention 2002 Super 8 Raffle Items Super Eight

- * Water Color Painting of Cuban Amazon by Beth Greenberg (Avian Entities)
- * Feather Hat Band by Lyrae Perry
- * \$400 Gift Certificate for an Original or Print by Gamini Ratnavira
- * Blue Parrotlet by Cyndie Wallace
- * 32 x 40 HQ Macaw Cage by Lion and Lamb Exotics
- * Powerspec PS8251 Computer by Adventures in Birds
- * Large cage by Jungle Nest Cages
- * Yellow-naped Amazon male split to cinnamon by Heidi Gallagher