Carrying out Pet Shop Inspections

During the preliminary part of an inspection you should look at the shop as a whole picture and carry out a brief dynamic assessment taking some of the following points into consideration:

- What does the shop smell like on entry?
- What is the temperature (too hot, or cold - is it appropriate to the species stocked)?
- What is the general condition of the fabric of the shop?
- How clean is the shop? – not just in the obvious ‘in sight’ areas
- Are the staff welcoming?
- Do staff offer excuses and explanations as to the conditions in the shop even before comment has been made?
Carrying out Pet Shop Inspections

A welfare assessment should be carried out of all the animals in the shop – (Look in all rooms including storage areas and outside sheds and garages)

If it is an existing licensed premises then there should be an existing schedule of species that can be kept in the premises and this schedule is a good reference point

If it is a new premises or an existing premises applying for new species on their licence then stocking densities will have to be calculated and a schedule produced or amended

Make a detailed record of the species and numbers of animals present in the shop at the time of the inspection

Just because a licensee has the facilities to accommodate a new species it does not mean that the inspector has to approve those species to be kept in the licensed premises

To ensure the welfare needs of each animal species in the premises is being met the inspector must be confident the licensee (or member of staff) has the knowledge of how each animal species differs and within each category the individual preferences
The Animal Welfare Act 2006

Use the Animal Welfare Act as an additional tool
(Check authorisations)

Improvement notices can be issued

Remember the 5 Freedoms:-

1. Its need for a suitable environment
2. Its need for a suitable diet
3. Its need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
4. Any need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals
5. Its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease
Livestock Assessment

Generally an Inspector is not qualified or expected to offer a diagnosis or recommend treatment for any sick or injured animals in a shop.

The competent inspector must be able to recognise signs of good health and symptoms of common problems of animals found in the shop.

NO UNFIT ANIMAL SHOULD BE OFFERED FOR SALE – but this does not mean it is an offence to have an unfit or sick animal in the shop, as long as the appropriate action is being taken and appropriate treatment is being given.
Puppies and Kittens

Most ‘common’ pets in UK
There should be no puppies or kittens in a licensed premises under 8 weeks of age
Under EU Reg 1/2005 puppies and kittens under the age of 8 weeks are not fit to be transported, unless with their mother.
Sourcing of puppies – UK, ROI, Europe – puppies from ROI and Europe must have a Pet passport and have been imported under the trade regulations, which includes prior notification to the AHVLA local office
Good Practice to identify all puppies with a microchip - This would aid with tracings if there was to be a disease outbreak with other litter mates.
Puppies and Kittens

Litters / batches should be kept separate (with caveats). Good purchase and sales records should be kept.

Feeding – At least 4 times a day and at reasonable intervals.

Exercise - preferably accommodation should have separate sleeping and exercise areas. If no exercise area is attached then puppies should be exercised at least 3 times a day in a bio-secure area.

Health – each puppy / kitten should be allocated a health record on arrival in the shop and this should be updated daily with facts such as date for worming and flea treatments – diet and any health concerns - such information should be passed to purchaser.
FISH

Ornamental fish are the third most popular pet after dogs and cats. The ornamental fish population in the UK exceeds 100 million, thus they are the most populous pet in the UK. Check water testing results and can carry out own tests – (check results for nitrates from tap water).
Cold Water Species

*Free Ammonia - max 0.02mg/l
*Nitrite - max 0.2mg/l
Dissolved Oxygen - min 6mg/l
Nitrate - max 50mg/l above ambient tap water

Tropical Freshwater Species

*Free Ammonia - max 0.02mg/l
*Nitrite - max 0.2mg/l
Dissolved Oxygen - min 6mg/l
Nitrate - max 50mg/l above ambient tap water
Tropical Marine Species

*Free Ammonia - max 0.01mg/l
*Nitrite - max 0.125mg/l
*pH - min 8.1
Dissolved Oxygen - min recommended 5.5mg/l (never lower than 4.0mg/litre)
Nitrate - max 100 mg/l
In excess of 1.1 million homes currently keep more than 8 million reptiles and amphibians as pets, the most popular are:

- Bearded dragons
- Corn snakes
- Leopard geckos
- Crested geckos
- Royal pythons
- Tortoises
The principles of care

What makes reptiles & amphibians different?

They are ectothermic, i.e. “having a body temperature that varies with the environment”

This means they are entirely dependent on their environment for temperature control

Two fundamental factors dominate husbandry of reptiles and amphibians

Heating & lighting
What to look for

Is the enclosure and set up appropriate for the species?
0 Is the size appropriate?
0 Is the substrate appropriate?
0 Is the décor appropriate, e.g. are hides provided?
0 Is the species nocturnal or diurnal

Is the lighting appropriate to the species?
0 Light intensity/duration
0 UVB (distance from animal, not obstructed, how old)

Is the heating appropriate for the species?
0 Temperature, is there a thermal gradient provided?
0 Is safe (e.g. are ceramic heaters protected)?
What to look for

Key points:
0 Does the enclosure look clean!
   0 Old shed skins
   0 Dried faeces
   0 Dead insects (feed) / = food not eaten

Records:
0 Staff training
0 Purchase record (invoice)
0 Feeding record (hatchling snakes)
0 Cleaning
Common Health Issues
Metabolic bone disease (MBD)
Common Health Issues

- Mouth rot
- Shell rot
- Abscess
- Eye infections
- Missing digits
Small Mammals

0 Large group of animals which includes a wide variety of species,
0 The rabbit is the 3rd most common mammal pet in the UK, after dogs and cats.
0 Other small mammals most common in pet shops - mice, rats, hamster, gerbils, Guinea pigs, chinchillas, degus, african pygmy hedgehogs and ferrets.
0 This group will share some similar husbandry conditions such as cleanliness, provision of shelter and environmental enrichment
0 Dietary needs will differ
RABBITS AND GUINEA PIGS

0 Accommodation has to provide for **hiding/sleeping**. Sleeping areas should be provided with straw or hay.

0 Location of the cage in the shop should avoid extremes of temperature – Rabbits suffer from heat stress.

0 Rabbits should not be housed with Guinea pigs as bullying can occur. Rabbits, cats and dogs can carry *Bordetella bronchiseptica* which can cause disease in guinea pigs.

0 Guinea pigs diet need to be supplemented with **Vitamin C**. (Rabbits do not)

0 Water should be always available in drip drinkers.

0 **For both species** Pelleted complete feeds are preferable to those based on seeds and grains, to prevent selective feeding.

0 **Hay** should be available *ad libitum* the fibre content is crucial for dental wear and gastrointestinal tract function.
Guinea pig and ring-worm
Rats and Mice

0 Rats if well socialised from an early age can make excellent pets they are highly intelligent and less nocturnal than mice.
0 Overcrowding can lead to aggressive behaviour in rats and mice
0 Random breeding – especially in mice can lead to overcrowding
0 Multi level housing is beneficial to allow natural behaviour patterns.
0 Ventilation and cleanliness are very important to prevent build up of ammonia.
0 Rats and mice should be provided with shelter or bolt-hole
0 Absorbent substrate wood shavings, shredded paper sufficient to promote foraging
0 Nesting material, gnawable items, empty boxes, ladders and other environmental enrichment items are beneficial for their welfare.
0 Water should be available at all times in drip bottles
Hamster, gerbils and degus

0 Hamster are very inquisitive and need **plenty of exercise**, in the wild they can cover up to 10km at night. Wheel should be provided – Syrian hamsters can get aggressive if living in groups when over the age of 7 weeks.

0 Gerbils and degus benefit from living in groups (single sex or harem). They will benefit from multi-floor caging with solid floors and ample provision of toys, a nesting box containing nesting material should by available and checked daily.

0 For gerbils and degus deep substrates more than 15cm of sawdust, shavings, peat and hay are recommended, gerbils will create their own system of tunnels.
Dietary requirements for hamster, degus and gerbils, kept in captivity are similar. Complete pellets are recommended to prevent selective feeding.

Water intake will differ considerably since gerbils originate from arid areas and drink less.

Water should be available at all times via a drip bottle.

All species will use a corner of their cage as latrine and this should be cleaned frequently.
Hamsters wet tail and overgrown incisors
Birds

0 There should be a suitable number of perches to allow every bird to perch at the same time

0 **Food and drink should be positioned in such way that the birds will not soil it – So, not under perches!**

0 Perches should be positioned in such way that perched birds could not soil each other

0 Ground species such as Japanese quails should be housed on their own

0 Basic husbandry roles regarding cleanliness must be applied

0 Soiled water and food must be removed and replaced – plenty of food available for dawn
Parrots

0 Parrots are very intelligent and environmental enrichment is extremely important to prevent behaviour problems and stereotypical behaviours.

0 Their cage need to be spacious to allow them to play and explore a wide variety of toys should be provided.
Common problems with parrots

0 Look for overgrown beak which will require veterinary intervention.

0 Claws can also be overgrown when the perches and nutrition are not suitable.
Dietary requirements

0 Nutritional diseases are common in caged birds, whatever the species. There are formulated diets for each species.

0 The formulated diets for psittacine birds should be supplemented with green leafy vegetables and tropical fruit.

0 Passerine birds do well on a diet of a clean seed mixture with vitamin supplement; grit should be provided.
Thank you for your attention