

## U.S. Department Of Agriculture Accepts Comments On Import/Export Fees Proposal

### **Costs to transport animals and animal products – including pet birds – would increase under rule**

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Bird breeders and owners could soon face a pricier process to transport pet birds in and out of the United States, thanks to a recent proposal by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

If the APHIS proposal passes, user fees to import and export animals and animal products – including birds – will increase incrementally during the fiscal years 2009 to 2013. The proposal to up fees reflects the expected costs to provide import and export services, according to the June 4, 2008, Federal Register, the U.S. government's official daily publication for rules, proposed rules and other federal documents. These services include inspecting and approving facilities for importing and exporting, processing import permit applications and endorsing export certificates.

"[Those affected] would be the people who are importing birds, for example, because we have quarantining, inspecting of the animals at ports of entry," said Madelaine Fletcher, a public affairs specialist with USDA-APHIS.

Under the proposal, the daily price to quarantine a bird weighing more than 1,000 grams in an APHIS quarantine facility would be \$18, according to the June 4 Federal Register entry. By October 2012, the fee would be \$21.

Rick Jordan, the chairman for the American Federation of Aviculture's (AFA) Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) committee, said he thinks the increase in fees would have a negative impact on bird breeders.

"I think that it's going to impact smaller entities that will transport one or two small shipments a year," said Jordan, who added that his comments stem from personal opinion and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the AFA.

Jordan said most breeders in the United States do not import and export pet birds because "it's a complicated system, and it's very expensive for a person who's not a large commercial operation."

He said he thinks it's unfair for bird breeders like him to pay the same user and licensing fees as someone who imports or exports more than one million shipments per year. Jordan suggests the fees should be based on the actual shipping an entity carries out.

The USDA is accepting public comments on the fees proposal until Aug. 4, 2008. To submit or view comments online, click [here](#); then click on "Add Comments." Visitors can also view related and supporting materials on this page.

"All comments are read and also become available for other people to see," Fletcher said. "The comments are taken into consideration in the rulemaking [process]."