

Hygiene protocol for reptile shows

- All reptiles are to be brought to the show in a white cotton bag or pillowslip, safely fastened to prevent escape of the reptile.
- All reptiles will be inspected for mites or any obvious signs of disease before being allowed entry to the exhibition area.
- Exhibitors will not be able to handle reptiles other than their own.
- Reptiles will not be removed from the cage until the end of the show, unless authorised by an official or veterinarian, appointed by the show committee (e.g for pre-purchase inspection).
- A designated room for pre-purchase inspection will be available (*see Appendix 1*). An attendant will be present to ensure that the table in the room is disinfected after each inspection.
- Judges, officials, veterinarians or anyone handling animals should take care to keep their clothing and equipment clean, and disinfect hands between handling reptiles.
- Purchasers will not be able to handle reptiles other than their own.
- Any unauthorised person removing a reptile from a display cage will be asked to leave the show immediately.
- All cages are to be sprayed with Top of Descent® spray and disinfected with F10® prior to occupation.
- Cages should all be on the one level and not stacked in order to minimise the spread of mites. An exception will be made in the case of cages being used by the one exhibitor.
- Newspaper or paper is to be used as a substrate. Other substrates are not acceptable.
- Hygiene stations providing F10® handwipes or spray will be available at strategic points (preshow inspection table, pre-purchase inspection room and throughout the exhibition area) so that handlers can disinfect their hands immediately after contact with a reptile.
- A veterinarian will be present or at least contactable by telephone during the course of the show.

Appendix 1:

Reptiles for sale

- All animals to be displayed in plastic “see-through” tubs.
- All tubs are to be treated with Top of Descent ® spray and F10® as described in the ‘Hygiene Protocol’.
- For close inspection the reptile shall be taken to a designated examination room.
- A footbath containing a suitable disinfectant such as F10® or Virkon® shall be at the entrance to this room. Everyone entering or leaving the room shall use the footbath.

- Reptiles can only be removed from a container once inside the examination room.
- Only vendors (sellers) or the appointed veterinarian may handle the reptile.
- After handling a reptile the vendor must disinfect his/her hands prior to leaving the room.
- The reptile shall stay with vendor until the end of the show.

Appendix 2:

Quarantine and hygiene – questions and answers

1. What diseases can be transmitted between reptiles at a show?
 - IBD (inclusion body disease), OPMV (ophidian paramyxovirus), other viral diseases, bacterial diseases (e.g. *Salmonella* spp.) and mites.
2. How are diseases transmitted?
 - Contact (e.g. reptile to reptile, substrate, cage furniture), body fluids (saliva, air borne droplets, faeces), blood.
 - Mites
3. How can we minimize this spread?
 - Limit the number of people handling reptiles.
 - Prevent reptile to reptile contact.
 - Ensure “best practice” quarantine and hygiene procedures.

Disclaimer:

Despite the best intentions no hygiene protocol will totally eliminate the risk of infection.

It is incumbent upon exhibitors and other participants to follow the above hygiene guidelines in order to minimise the spread of disease.

Bibliography :

1. Hygiene protocol for the control of disease in captive snakes. Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW). 2004.
2. Mader D, 2006. Reptile Medicine and Surgery, 2nd edition. Elsevier, Marathon, Fl..

Acknowledgements:

The following people have provided much appreciated assistance and comments in the preparation of this document:

Veterinarians Dr Bob Doneley, Dr Michael Cannon, Dr Anne Fowler, Dr Jane Roffey, and herpetologist Peter Johnson.

*Robert Johnson BVSc MACVSc CertZooMed BA
 South Penrith Veterinary Clinic
 126 Stafford Street
 South Penrith NSW 2750
 T: 02 4721 4796
 E: reptilevet@tpg.com.au
 W: www.reptilevet.com.au*