

## PRE-SHOW ISOLATION

The purpose of pre-show isolation is to prevent the spread of infectious viruses with high mortality rates, such as Sendai and SDA, at sponsored shows. In other countries, such as the UK, they do not have to deal with such illnesses, and our fancy at this time does not have the pharmaceutical support to have developed vaccinations against it. While there is no way to guarantee that bringing your animal to a show will be a safe experience, we must rely on every participating fancier to do their best to minimize any chance of infection.

When placing a rattery, no matter how small, in pre-show isolation, what you are doing is doing your best to make certain that the rattery does not become infected. That means that some alteration of the routine of the rattery, and the surrounding living area, must occur.

### *Time Frame*

Pre-show isolation is to last 30 full days prior to each show's date.

### *Uninfected Ratteries Only*

Pre-show isolation cannot happen if the rattery is, or is believed to be, already infected. For an **infected** rattery, a full **quarantine** is necessary. Since a full quarantine for SDA and Sendai is a minimum of 60 days, infected ratteries cannot enter pre-show isolation for a show. Please see our related **quarantine** article for what to do if you think your animals are ill!

### *What is a "rattery?"*

For the purposes of these guidelines, please assume that "rattery" means the place where your rodents live, as well as any place which shares connected air space through ventilation systems or doors. It does not matter how few or many rodents live there. A rattery with only a single rat living in it is the same as one with one hundred, for the purpose of these guidelines.

### *Shopping*

It is believed that SDA and Sendai can travel on items, clothing, and nasal passages of other animals for at least two hours and still infect our animals. For that reason, precautions should be taken when shopping for your pet.

- If possible, try to shop for pet supplies at a store which does not carry any sort of other animals, especially other rodents.
- If you must shop at a pet store which carries other animals, try to keep at least two hours between your visit to the store and your return home. If possible, schedule

your shopping trip so that the pet supply store is the first one you visit, on a lunch break from work, or on your way to a movie, dinner or other outing.

- Do not bring your dog or other animal to the pet store with you if they have any contact whatsoever with the rattery.
- Do not bring new supplies into immediate contact with your pets. If possible, freezing bedding before use may kill both parasites and many germs. Food or bedding may also be left in the (if clean) back or trunk of your car overnight.

### *Breeding*

All rodent pups must be at least 4 weeks of age in order to be shown. No rodent in the pre-show isolation location may be pregnant or nursing during the pre-show isolation. That means that all young animals must be separated from their mothers before the first day of pre-show isolation, and no animals may be bred during the course of the isolation.

Rodents may be placed **out** of the isolated rattery if care is taken not to risk infection of the rattery. Adopters must be met at a separate location away from the isolated rattery.

At no time will any animal who has left the isolated rattery be allowed back in. This breaks isolation, and the rattery may no longer attend the show.

### *No Rodents In*

For the duration of the pre-show isolation, no new rodents, lagomorphs, or avians of any kind will be allowed into the rattery. This includes any resident rodent, lagomorph, or avian who has left the premises for any reason. This includes recreational outings such as car rides or visits with family as well as visits to the veterinarian. If such an animal must leave the rattery premises, they must be housed elsewhere for the duration of the isolation, or the isolation is broken and the rattery may no longer attend the show.

### *Veterinary Care*

Any rodent who shows signs of contagious infection during the pre-show isolation should be considered to break isolation, and the rattery may no longer attend the show. Since it is possible to have become infected before isolation started, special attention should be paid to such signs as:

- swollen, cloudy, watery or porphyrin-stained eyes
- swollen throat glands
- excessive sneezing, coughing or wheezing
- porphyrin stains on the front paws or face
- lethargy, weight loss, coarse and puffy coat
- hunched posture, hanging of the head over the shelf edge, or standing with head elevated in attempt to breathe through congestion
- more than one animal showing above signs
- deaths in the rattery

Any rodent who needs to go to the veterinarian for any reason may not be allowed back into the rattery. They must be housed elsewhere for the duration of the isolation.

If any rat in the rattery dies during the isolation, the cause of death must be confirmed, by a qualified veterinarian, through both gross necropsy and proper pathology, to have died from non-infectious causes. Paperwork from the veterinarian or lab must be sent directly to the show secretary in that case, without having passed first through the rattery in question. If a veterinarian cannot confirm a non-contagious cause of death for the animal, the show isolation is broken and the rattery may not attend the show.