

Show Rules and Guidelines for One and Two Day Koi Shows within the UK.

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Submitted by the Koi Policy Group (UK).

SECTION	Page
1 SCOPE	2
2 DEFINITIONS	2
3 DUTY OF CARE AND RESPONSIBILITIES	4
4 SHOW ADMINISTRATION	4
5 SHOW SITE AND EQUIPMENT	6
6 HANDLING OF KOI	8
7 JUDGING STANDARDS	8
8 STOCKING LEVELS IN SHOW VATS	11
9 BENCHING HEALTH CRITERIA	11
10 WATER QUALITY	13
11 ADVICE TO EXHIBITORS	16
12 BENCHING PROCEDURES	17

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INTRODUCTION

In 1992 Mr Gary Pritchard, the Chairman of the Judging and Standards Committee (JSC) of the British Koi Keepers Society (BKKS) presided over the instigation of a set of Show Rules. These were put together by the members of the JSC for the 43 plus annual koi shows in the UK.

The Government formed an Animal Welfare Committee in February 2002 and Dr Paula Reynolds, an Aquatic Scientist known to them via her work with DEFRA, was invited to represent the UK koi industry on it. Dr Reynolds invited Mr Pritchard to join them as the representative for the UK koi hobby. Of the many organisations and hobbies represented on this committee when the Animal Welfare Act 2006 was finally enacted only Koi, Pigeon and Chicken Shows were granted the privilege not to have to be licensed in the Second Tranche of the Legislation due to having adequate Show Rules in place. This second tranche has still to be enacted.

The BKKS updated their Show Rules in 2010 using their various committees. Dr Reynolds and Mr Pritchard were instrumental in these.

Now after many changes in various laws, upgrades in equipment, the Covid pandemic as relating to the members of the public, plus being mindful of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, these Show Rules have been upgraded again by the KOI POLICY GROUP (KPG), an independent group of people and for the benefit of all UK koi keeping organisations, their show officials, and exhibitors.

1. SCOPE

The following Show Rules and Guidelines define best practice for Koi Shows. The facilities to hold koi at a 2-day show are temporary and are not intended for long term use as this requires biological filtration. The various usage of equipment and products in the Rules and Guidelines applies only to one or two day koi shows. These Show Rules and Guidelines meet the relevant provisions of the Animal Welfare Acts and give guidance on interpretation of the duty of care owed to the Koi by the organisers, exhibitors, and others in the context of koi shows.

These Show Rules and Guidelines only endorse English Style Koi Shows. This means that every exhibitor has separate vats to hold their koi throughout the duration of the show. Japanese style Koi Shows, where the koi in each class are mixed together in a Show Vat are not endorsed.

To comply with Animal Welfare legislation, it is the Show Chairman's responsibility to ensure that every aspect of the show complies with these Show Rules and Guidelines.

All sections of these Rules and Guidelines that relate to the health and welfare of Koi have been drawn up by a professional Consultant in all the relevant biological sciences.

These Show Rules & Guidelines apply to all Koi Shows (Open and closed) and supersede all previous rules.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Animal Welfare Acts are the Animal Welfare Acts 2006 Chapter 45 in England and Wales and the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Welfare of Animals (N.I.) Act 1972. The AWA Section 9 places everyone under a Duty of Care obligation in respect of animals including fish. Section 5 "Mutilations" covers Cosmetic Surgery, as well as Section 9.

2.2 All clubs should appoint Welfare officials and these Guidelines refer to Koi Welfare Officers (KWO). The KWO are officials whose responsibility under these Guidelines is to carry out or oversee the regular analysis of water during koi shows and to ensure good water quality is maintained throughout the show until all koi have been debenched. KWO personnel must be well informed on water science and experienced in koi show procedures in order to ensure koi welfare is properly addressed. Welfare personnel can be club members with an interest in the scientific aspects of koi keeping and should be aware of the Duty of Care required by the AWA Sections 5 and 9.

- 2.3 The Aquatic Sciences are well represented at most koi shows. By following these Rules and Guidelines all Koi Shows will be unique in comparison to those for other animals and ensures professional expertise in many fields is available in the showground should the need arise
- 2.4 Koi is the abbreviation of Nishikigoi which means brocaded carp and this term does not apply to any other Carp species or subspecies.
- 2.5 A Koi Show is an organised event where several Exhibitors bring their koi to be judged against one another, and to be viewed by other koi keepers or members of the public.
- 2.6 Closed Koi Shows are shows organised either separately or jointly by one or more koi clubs. Exhibitors must be members of at least one of the organising clubs.
- 2.7 Open Koi Shows are shows organised either separately or jointly by one or more koi clubs. Exhibitors do not need to be members of the organising club(s).
- 2.8 Photographic Koi Shows are events where the Exhibitor takes photographs of the koi that are to be judged. The koi do not move from their home pond, therefore, the majority of the welfare provisions of these guidelines are not applicable.
- 2.9 Garden Koi Shows are events where the koi are photographed/judged in their own pond.
- 2.10 If more than one KWO is to officiate at a koi show, then a Senior KWO must be nominated. See section 3.6
- 2.11 The Judging Standards Team (JST) is the authority on all aspects of judging standards and criteria and will advise organising clubs on the management of Judging Koi Shows. Any existing organisation or society having a body of personnel that are suitably trained and experienced will be able to supply a Judging Standards Team.
- 2.12 The Senior Judge is to be appointed according to the prevailing rules of the overseeing JST organisation. They become the most senior Judge on duty at the Koi Show. Approved Judges are JST Judges and Judges of other overseas bodies who meet JST judging standards, and who comply with the JST Code of Practice and who are approved to judge at Koi Shows by a majority vote of the Judging Team.
- 2.13 The Show Chairman is the Chair of the Show Committee and is responsible for the overall organisation, co-ordination and management of the show, and the person responsible for ensuring these Show Rules and Guidelines are implemented.
- 2.14 The Show Committee is made up of the Show Chairman and other Show Officials who are specialists or selected people responsible for the specific tasks within the organisational framework of the show e.g. Benching, Benching Administration, Show Administration, Water Management, Public Relations, Vat Allocation and who are responsible for assisting the Show Chairman in ensuring these Guidelines are implemented.
- 2.15 The Exhibitor is the owner of the koi. The Exhibitor may delegate his/her activities under these Show Rules and Guidelines to an authorised agent, but as owner of the koi, retains responsibility for always ensuring the wellbeing of the koi.
- 2.16 Benched means when the koi are accepted into the Koi Show as evidenced by the signing of the show entry form by the Benching Official and Exhibitor.
- 2.17 De-benched means after the Koi Show has finished, and the owner takes back responsibility for the koi as evidenced by the Exhibitor signing the de-benching form.
- 2.18 Dealers are people who sell koi, and this includes their immediate families. Various organisations may have different interpretations.
- 2.19 Hobbyists are koi keepers who do not meet the definition of "Dealer", and are not exhibiting in the course of their occupation or business.
- 2.20 The Centre Ring is that area of the showground containing the show vats and koi handling equipment and having access is restricted to Show Officials, Benching Officials, Koi Welfare Officials, and Judges.

3. DUTY OF CARE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 The final responsibility for the care of koi accepted into a Koi Show is with the Show Chairman, if necessary, the Show Chairman should take advice from the Senior Koi Welfare Officer. Exhibitors are responsible for their koi prior to acceptance into the Koi Show and continue to hold responsibility for their koi throughout the Koi Show in conjunction with the Show Chairman.
- 3.2 Exhibitors hold full responsibility for their koi prior to arrival at the show ground. It is the responsibility of all Exhibitors to ensure the well-being of their own koi before and during transportation to and from the Koi Show.

The exhibitor must be responsible for ensuring that the same plastic bag and transport box used for the journey to the show ground is used for the return journey home as a biosecurity precaution. Should damage occur to either, suitable replacements must be found. It is advisable to store the bags in the box in a vehicle to avoid cross-infection unless provision for storage is available, spare bags and elastic bands may be available.

NOTE: - See health criteria in section 9 and Section 5.1.6.

- 3.3 The Exhibitor shares responsibility for their koi until benching is completed and must not assume that once their koi are swimming freely in the Show Vat, but prior to completion of benching, that the koi are accepted into the Koi Show. At all times during the show, the Exhibitor shares joint responsibility for their koi with the Show Chairman. The Exhibitor must comply with the Show Chairman's decision if a koi is not accepted into the Koi Show for any reason. Any advice or directions will be dependent upon the individual circumstances, and facilities available e.g. to take the koi home or to put it in a specific vat. In cases where there is no suitable alternative, at the owner's request, assuming it does not compromise the welfare of other koi and, with the best interests of the affected koi, a fish in this situation may be left in the show vat but excluded from judging. The Show Administration team should make sure that the JST are aware of the withdrawal of any koi from the Show.
- 3.4 As the Exhibitor continues to hold shared responsibility for their koi throughout the duration of the Koi Show, they must be contactable by the Show Officials at any time whilst their koi are in the Koi Show, e.g. by mobile phone.
- 3.5 The full responsibility for the care of the koi is returned to the Exhibitor when the koi are de-benched, i.e. after the Koi Show has finished and the owner signs the de-benching form.
- 3.6 The Koi Welfare Officer (KWO), or Senior KWO, if more than one is appointed, is responsible for advising the Show Chairman and Show Officials on all welfare matters and the maintenance of water testing and water quality relating to Koi Shows. The main purpose of a KWO attending Koi Shows is to ensure best practise for the well-being of the koi. All Koi Shows should have at least one KWO who is contactable whilst there are koi on the showground, and they must have continual access to areas where koi or water is held. The Senior Koi Welfare Officer should contact the Show Chairman in advance to discuss preparations.
- 3.7 All members of the Aquatic Industry attending shows whether they deal in koi or the items and services that support koi are required to obey these rules. Dealers in koi whether they are displayed or are offered for sale are required to hold a current Pet Shop Licence that pertains to their premises as evidence to the Show Chairman that they are bona fide dealers. Koi may only be displayed when no Pet Shop Licence or temporary Licence has been granted for sales to take place on site, or until such time as animal sales are approved for Pet Fairs. Koi dealers should ask the relevant Show Official in advance for water to be available for filling vats and water changes.

Adherence to these rules ensures that Koi Welfare Officers and Show Officials will be available should problems arise. They have the right to require a Dealer to leave the showground in cases where they hold the opinion that a show rule has been breached or koi welfare as stated in the AWA is being compromised.

- 3.8 The Show Chairman must ensure there are sufficient notices to inform visiting members of the public of their responsibilities relating to the safety and welfare of the Koi on display at the show.

4. SHOW ADMINISTRATION

- 4.1 The Judges Standards Team (JST) are the authority responsible for judging matters relating to Koi Shows and the JST decisions on matters of judging standards are final.

- 4.2 At each Koi Show, judging decisions are taken by majority vote of the Judges with the Senior Judge having a casting vote. For the avoidance of doubt, in the case of any dispute relating to Judging Standards, the Senior Judge's decision is final.
- 4.3 The Senior Koi Welfare Officer's decision on the health status, and well-being of all koi entered into the Koi Show is final. The Show Chairman should facilitate any action(s) proposed by the KWO as soon as reasonably practical.
- 4.4 In case of violent or abusive behaviour towards any Show Officials or Stewards, the Show Chairman has the right to refuse entry into the Koi Show of those persons' koi or may impose other sanctions on that person that are appropriate to the circumstances. In addition, violent or abusive behaviour by an Exhibitor will result in the JST refusing to judge that Exhibitor's Koi, or the Show Chairman withdrawing future invitations to the show.
- 4.5 The Show Chairman's decision is final on any other matter except those covered in clauses 4.2 and 4.3.
- 4.6 All Koi Shows must have a KWO available to monitor koi welfare in compliance with the Animal Welfare Act. The KWO will seek advice from other agencies should it be necessary. This does not apply to Photographic Koi Shows, Garden Shows or Virtual Internet Shows.
- 4.7 All koi entered into Koi Shows must be owned by the Exhibitor and the Show Committee must take reasonable steps to ensure ownership. In case of uncertainty, the Show Chairman's decision on whether to allow the koi to enter the Koi Show is final.
- 4.8 Exhibitors must be Hobbyists unless there is a Dealers' Class.
- 4.9 Koi entered into Koi Shows by Dealers, or members of their household, shall be entered into a separate class called the Dealers' Class. If there is no Dealers' Class at the Koi Show, then the koi must be excluded from the Koi Show.
- 4.10 Benching commences when the benching team is assembled, and the first koi is ready for assessment by the benching team. Benching should commence at the designated time notified in advance to Exhibitors.
- 4.11 No Exhibitor may sell koi from Show Vats at any Koi Show.
- 4.12 All koi are entered at the owner's risk. Koi Show Officials will endeavour to ensure that the welfare of koi is not in any way compromised during the Koi Show. No responsibility can be undertaken by the organising club or its Show Committee for loss or damage.
- 4.13 Sufficient documentation is required to ensure health standards are maintained. For Administration, paper and/or electronic devices must be available to manage benching, de-benching and judging. To facilitate benching administration, sufficient computers, computer programmes, cameras, film, picture storage, printers, paper, and printing ink must be provided.
- 4.14 All results are provisional until the Senior Judge confirms the final decisions to the relevant Show Official at the end of judging and cannot be altered afterwards.
- 4.15 The organising Show Committee shall throughout the show provide adequate numbers of Show Stewards to maintain a safe environment for exhibited koi and visitors to the Koi Show. All Show Stewards and Officials should be easily identifiable e.g. wear identification badges/rosettes or a club/show tee shirt or similar. Centre Ring personnel shall have adequate training and be authorised to enter the Centre Ring by Show Chairman. In particular, sufficient personnel should be available to effect water changes promptly.
- Only Show Officials are allowed into the Centre Ring whilst the judging is in progress. This will primarily be the KWO and the Water Team only. Any other person could be classed as affecting judging decisions and will bring the integrity of the Show into disrepute.
- 4.16 The organising Show Committee should provide first aid cover, provide adequate toilet facilities, and comply with Health and Safety regulations.

4.17 Public liability insurance covering Koi Shows must be obtained by the organising club or any overseeing body taking on the responsibility. A copy of the certificate should be made available on request by any party with a valid interest.

5. SHOW SITE AND EQUIPMENT

Centre Ring

5.1.1 The appropriate number of separate Show Vats must be available for the number of Exhibitors who have confirmed they will bring koi to the Koi Show. Each Exhibitor should have their own separate vat, however, provided recommended stocking levels are not exceeded, it is acceptable for Exhibitors to share a show vat where the koi concerned live in the same home pond e.g. where two of the Exhibitors are husband and wife, parent and child, or two people sharing the same pond. It is recommended that an appropriate number of contingency vats are provided.

5.1.2 Sufficient quantity of equipment including appropriately sized koi pan nets and inspection bowls, water quality test kits or electronic meters, and pumps and hoses for water changing should be provided to ensure these Rules and Guidelines can be implemented. Additional details can be found in the Benching Code of Practice in Section 12.

5.1.3 Appropriate notices advising the public of their responsibilities towards the koi and reminding Show Officials of their responsibilities should be displayed prominently around the Show Vats. Some examples are below.

- “No smoking, eating or drinking near the vats”
- “Do not kick, or lean on the vats”
- “Do not put your hands in the water”
- “Disinfect hands when entering this area”
- “Only authorised show officials may enter this area”

5.1.4 Show Vats, when containing koi, should be supervised at all times and the vats and aeration equipment should be checked at regular intervals to ensure the air supply and water levels are maintained.

5.1.5 Oxygen or other appropriate aeration facilities should be available to Exhibitors during de-benching for bagging their koi ready for transportation to home.

5.1.6 Whilst it is the Exhibitor who is responsible for providing the equipment for transportation of their koi, the Show Committee should provide a number of spare suitably sized koi bags and rubber bands for contingency use.

5.1.7 Equipment only used in the centre ring must not come into contact with dealers' vats, water, or livestock.

5.2 Vats

5.2.1 Although good practice is to ensure that all show vats are cleaned and disinfected before storage after each use, it is recommended that all vats should be cleaned, disinfected, and inspected in advance of the show, so that any defects may be dealt with in a timely manner.

5.2.2 Zeolite filters, if used, should be, cleaned, disinfected, and refilled with new zeolite before installation in the vats.

5.2.3 Exhibition vats should be free from internal protrusion and sharp edges. It is recommended that show vats are 60cm / 24 inches deep or more.

5.2.4 The level of water in show vats should be approximately 35cm/14 inches for 50cm/20 inch deep vats and 40cm/16 inches for all other deeper vats except during water changes.

5.2.5 The addition to show vats of salt (to a maximum of 1/2 ounce per gallon) or zeolite, but not both together is permissible. Other additions to vats should be approved in advance by the Koi Welfare Officer. Any additive

must be added to all vats and prior to commencement of judging and such additions must be notified in advance and in writing to Exhibitors.

- 5.2.6 Anti-splash screens should be placed in between each vat containing koi belonging to different owners. It is recommended that these should start from at least 10cm/4 inches below the top of the vat and reach at least 80cm/32 inches above the top of the water level. Additionally, their width should be at least 2/3rds of the diameter of the vat. Plastic curtains, suitably fixed to a frame that does not allow them to blow in the wind, are an alternative measure. Whatever barrier method is used, it is recommended that cleaning takes place between each use.
- 5.2.7 Where koi are retained in vats overnight or at any other time when minimum staff are available to supervise them, vats should be securely covered with appropriate material (e.g. greenhouse shading).
- 5.2.8 In-vat filtration is permissible provided it is the same in all Show Vats.

5.3 Aeration Equipment

- 5.3.1 Appropriate aeration using equipment that produces large volumes of air at low pressures should be provided at all times to any vat where koi are present in order to maintain adequate dissolved oxygen levels in the water.
- 5.3.2 Air blowers are strongly recommended in preference to compressors.
- 5.3.3 There should be sufficient spares and back up facilities for air and power. Additional aeration equipment should be available to respond to varying weather conditions.
- 5.3.4 It is recommended that all show vats, spare vats, and water storage vats are aerated for a minimum of 24 hours prior to the arrival of the first koi and until all koi have left the showground.

5.4 Biosecurity

- 5.4.1 Full biosecurity is not possible in show ground conditions. However, all reasonable precautions should be taken to protect the koi from the risk of cross-infection. The Centre Ring should be arranged so there are controlled entry points with hand disinfectant. This should also be available in other locations in the Centre Ring as convenient such as adjacent to the disinfection and rinse vats. At larger Shows, ideally, they should be paired at either end of the centre ring to minimise the potential for cross-contamination. Disposable paper towels should be provided for hand drying where needed. Fabric towels are unhygienic and should not be used.
- 5.4.2 The disinfection product in use on entry to the centre ring is for hands and is precautionary. The product used for sterilising vats and equipment as well as hands and arms during the show must be fish safe and have both antibacterial and antiviral properties. The term disinfection refers to the process of maintaining a high standard of hygiene. However, a product that is only a disinfectant is not adequate for sterilisation in a koi show situation.
- 5.4.3 All vats must be of a suitable size for the dipping of bowls, nets, and other shared equipment. The disinfection vats should be refreshed and topped up to the recommended level at regular intervals to ensure the pathogen kill rate is adequate. Rinse vats are essential to remove by products created by disinfection. The rinse vats should be filled with clean water and the contents changed frequently. Disinfection and rinsing vats should be adjacent to each other, and precautions taken to ensure that water, from items that have not been disinfected and rinsed does not drip into vats containing koi or into reservoir vats that hold clean water.
- 5.4.4 Separate handling equipment for each owner's vat or vats must be segregated for the duration of the show so they cannot be used in another exhibitor's vat. If this provision is not possible more disinfection and rinsing vats may be required as it is essential the nets and other frequent use items have the required exposure time to an antimicrobial product to ensure that the risk of cross infection has been prevented or minimised. It is essential to sterilise the vats, nets, and all items of equipment in use at a koi show that have been in contact with fish or vat water. The required dose level and contact time is vital for the product to be fully effective, and the directions for use must be strictly adhered to in order ensure that the highest standard of hygiene is achieved. If items are not needed, they can be left in the disinfection vat until required.
- 5.4.5 Using the same vat to sterilise both centre ring equipment as well as the hands and arms of personnel is inadequate. The antimicrobial in the equipment disinfection vat will eliminate fish pathogens effectively when

not overloaded with matter. Handlers of koi must keep in mind that koi that appear healthy can be carriers of serious diseases and handling koi poses a greater risk of cross infection between koi. The provision of a vat or bowl containing the antimicrobial product for the exclusive use of the hands and arms of handlers and also a bowl for rinsing is a far safer option. When space permits the use of an antimicrobial soap and the provision of a small water tank and wash basin connected to the dirty water pipe is an alternative hygiene measure. Disposable paper towels and a bin or bag for their collection is also required,

- 5.4.6 Any person intending to handle koi or to have contact with vat water must disinfect their hands and lower arms with a suitable antimicrobial immediately prior to commencing the activity. Long hair must be tied up to stop it falling into the vat and during Benching or Netting. Rings and watches must be removed if koi are being handled.
- 5.4.7 Any person who has handled koi or had contact with the vat water or items used in the vat must disinfect their hands and lower arms with an antimicrobial product as soon as the activity is completed. It is essential hygiene that hand and arm disinfection is carried out between each vat.
- 5.4.8 Care must be taken when handling vat air lines. Any part touched must not enter back into the vat water. Regulators for turning off the air supply (i.e. during the Judging) are preferred.

6. HANDLING OF KOI

The movement and handling of koi should be minimised and carried out within the following guidelines.

- 6.1.1 All movement of koi between Show Vats should be done in double, heavy gauge plastic, koi bags.
- 6.2.1 Koi in transportation bags should be carried HORIZONTALLY by two people, each using both hands.
- 6.3.1 Under no circumstances should koi be moved in small rigid containers from which they may jump.
- 6.4.1 Under no circumstances should koi be transferred by hand from vat to vat. Sock nets of the appropriate size may be used.
- 6.5.1 Koi should never be lifted fully out of the water using a net, instead they should be guided into a bowl as described in the benching procedure in Section 12. Koi may be gently lifted in a net during judging, provided the gills remain covered with water and only the dorsal fin and back are out of the water.
- 6.6.1 Only competent handlers of koi should be used for the handling and netting of koi.

7. JUDGING STANDARDS General Principles

- 7.1.1 Judges are required to act in accordance with their Code of Conduct at all times.
- 7.1.2 Judges on duty at a koi Show should not be involved in benching to ensure that they do not know who owns the koi they are later judging. At larger koi shows, judges who benched the hobbyist classes may judge the dealers' classes and vice versa provided they do not judge classes that they themselves benched.
- 7.1.3 Exhibitors should not take koi that are not in perfect condition to Koi Shows. If presented for show entry with any minor problem for example, Carp Pox, whilst not significant enough to exclude a koi from a Koi Show, if it passes the 'skin test' in Section 9.2.1, when judged against others, such a Koi will be at a considerable disadvantage. Female Koi that are gravid or carrying eggs may not have a normal body shape. It is possible this will affect the way they are judged and putting some gravid koi into the show environment can be detrimental to their health and wellbeing and exhibitors should not enter such fish.

7.2.0 Sizes, Grand Champion, and other Major Prizes

- 7.2.1 **Sizes** The approved list of size classifications below should be used at all Open Koi Shows, however, the Show Committee has discretion whether to include a Size 8 class. Closed Koi Shows, which often have smaller numbers of koi, may combine sizes, or adopt their own size criteria and may reallocate major prizes as appropriate to the sizes used.

Size 1:	above 15cm to 25cm
Size 2:	above 25cm to 35cm
Size 3:	above 35cm to 45cm
Size 4:	above 45cm to 55cm
Size 5:	above 55cm to 65cm
Size 6:	above 65cm to 75cm
Size 7:	above 75cm to 85cm
Size 8	above 85cm

7.2.2 Grand Champion is the Best Koi in the Koi Show. This koi is often excluded from winning other prizes in that Koi Show.

7.2.3 Suggested major prizes at Koi Shows with Sizes 1-8

Best Baby Koi	Size 1 & 2
Best Young Koi	Size 3 & 4
Best Adult Koi	Size 5 & 6
Best Mature Koi	Size 7 & 8

7.2.4 Suggested major Prizes at other Koi Shows with Sizes 1-7

Best Baby Koi	Size 1 & 2
Best Young Koi	Size 3 & 4
Best Adult Koi	Size 5
Best Mature Koi	Size 6 & 7

7.3 Standard Classes

7.3.1 Show Committees may offer any additional awards they feel appropriate, subject to the following definitions. These other awards may be made, subject to a written definition of the standard required to make the award being notified to the JST, satisfactory paperwork being presented to the JST, and satisfactory time being available. Any non-standard awards, e.g. Friendship Trophies from overseas Koi societies, may be given outside of the JST Judging, provided they are "awarded" and not "judged". Awards criteria should be clearly displayed for the Exhibitors and Public.

7.3.2 The Beginner's Prize is for the best koi of an Exhibitor who has not previously exhibited at any Koi Show. Beginners retain their status until the end of the first Koi Show at which they exhibit.

7.3.3 The Novice's Prize is for the best koi of an Exhibitor who has not previously been judged to have won any prize at any Koi Show. Novices retain their status until the end of the Koi Show at which they are first judged to have won a prize.

7.3.4 The Junior's Prize is for the best koi of an Exhibitor who, on the day of the Koi Show, is under 18 years of age.

7.3.5 A Home Bred Prize is for the best koi spawned from an Exhibitor's own koi and raised by that Exhibitor in his own facilities.

7.3.6 The Jumbo Prize should be awarded to the longest koi exhibited. The Benching Officials advise the Judges which koi was measured to be the longest koi at benching. This award is designed specifically to educate the public and potentially new koi keepers about the size koi can grow and therefore the facilities needed to keep them. Quality is only an issue when there are two exhibits of equal length.

- 7.3.7 Judges will not judge a Tategoi Class at any Koi Show because it is subjective and open to misinterpretation.
- 7.3.8 The criteria for judging Dealer Classes will be the same as the criteria used for judging hobbyist classes at the same Koi Show
- 7.3.9 Cosmetic Surgery. Performing any cosmetic enhancement of any animal is in direct contravention of the AWA 2006 Section 5 and 9, and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966. Therefore, allowing koi into the show should be conceived as promoting the practice. Processes should be in place to prevent exhibitors from exhibiting koi that display, or could be perceived as displaying, any signs of this practice. See also Sections 2.1 and 9.2.3
- 7.3.10 In many koi societies koi with specifically bred deformities (long fins, short bodies) are also excluded from being exhibited at shows. To prevent any unnecessary transport, exhibitors should be advised of this ahead of the show. (See 7.5.1)

7.4 Award of Prizes

- 7.4.1 Results are provisional until the results are handed by the Senior Judge to the Show Chairman or nominated Show Committee Member at the end of Judging. These results are then final and cannot be changed.
- 7.4.2 Under no circumstances can a judging decision be changed after the prize has been awarded at prize-giving. In the unlikely event that an Exhibitor is found to have been ineligible to enter the Koi Show, (e.g. a Dealer has entered Hobbyist classes), the relevant awarded prize may be revoked; however, all other prizes stand as awarded at prize giving.

7.5 Benching Varieties

- 7.5.1 The approved list of the 13 benching varieties below should be used at all Open Koi Shows. It is recommended that Closed Koi Shows use the same list of benching varieties, however the local Show Committee have discretion to amend classes with prior agreement of the JST.

Kohaku

Sanke

Showa (including Kage Showa)

Utsurimono

Bekko

Tancho – including Gin Rin Tancho

Kin Gin Rin – Go Sanke - (Kohaku, Sanke, Showa). Note: all other Kin Gin Rin to be benched in variety classes, e.g. Gin Rin Hariwake is benched in Hikari Moyo.

Koromo (including Goshiki)

Asagi / Shusui

Kawarimono - all other non-metallic koi not already mentioned.

Hikarimuji

Hikarimoyo

HikariUtsuri

Grass Carp, Long Finned Koi and Short Bodied Koi are not eligible for entry into a Koi Show

8. STOCKING SHOW VATS

- 8.1.1 The safe stocking level at which koi can be held for a two day show depends on various factors. A team to carry out water changes must be in place in the Centre Ring ready for the results of the ammonia tests all the time that koi are in the showground. It is likely that vats holding a number of koi and those holding larger koi will need to be changed more often. The pH of the vat water can influence the ammonia level and as water changes could cause fluctuations monitoring water parameters is important.
- 8.2.1 An adequate volume of fresh dechlorinated water must be available to meet the water change demands throughout the duration of the show. The number and sizes of koi entered must be on the show entry forms so organisers can plan ahead. The Show Chairman must ensure that there is never a shortfall in either the water supply or the personnel to change water at any period during the show. Back up contingency plans for either should be in place at all times.
- 8.3.1 Overstocking vats must be avoided, and as vat sizes vary the acceptable number of koi to be held in each vat will also differ. It is advisable for show organisers to avoid the need for excessive water changes if an exhibitor has not booked enough vats by having spare vats available.

9. BENCHING HEALTH CRITERIA

- 9.1.1 The requirements for the condition of koi submitted for inclusion in Koi Shows.

The advice available from show organisers to those entering koi should ensure owners are aware only koi and no other Carp species or subspecies can be shown. Owners must appreciate their fish will be assessed and must be in good health and have been prepared for showing see 11.2.3

During the Benching Process should any koi fail to meet the benching health criteria, a contingency vat or koi carrier should be available, or the Exhibitor can return the koi to the home pond. In a contingency vat, housing koi together that cannot enter the show is unsafe and breaks biosecurity. Floating koi in the bag they arrived in is also unsafe. A clean plastic transit bag is an improvement, however water droplets spread disease. The principle of the English style koi show with biosecure measures in place ensures there is no fish or water contact, and this must be preserved.

The Koi Welfare Officer (KWO) should advise the Exhibitor the reason a koi is excluded from the Show. In the case of individual koi the Exhibitor, Show Chairman, and KWO can agree the appropriate course of action. In all cases where other Exhibitors' fish could be affected, the Exhibitor must comply with the Show Chairman's decision and the Exhibitor should be advised to monitor the fish and obtain professional advice if the problem is unresolved after the koi returns home.

A vat used to hold any disqualified koi must be disinfected along with all equipment used after the koi has been removed irrespective of the reason for the isolation of the fish.

9.2.0 Health Assessment

Good koi husbandry must be seen to be paramount for koi show entry and during benching koi are assessed using the signs listed below. The entire body of every koi is observed including the areas not normally visible. This is carried out to prevent Koi being entered into the show or on display that are not in peak condition. Some signs could indicate a health problem whilst others are a transient condition that will pass. Changes of temperature, pH, as well as recent netting and travel can cause reactions in koi that may disappear after a period in a recovery tank and koi can be re-assessed later.

The decision to exclude any koi rests with the Koi welfare Officer (KWO) and this must be clearly understood. The health assessment list is for show entry qualification purposes only no diagnosis can take place on the showground.

9.2.1 General Demeanour

- Inability to maintain neutral buoyancy in the water
- Unusual or extreme behaviour
- Laying on one side.
- Swimming with head down or up.
- Shaking head.

- Mouthing at surface continually.
- Lethargy.
- One or both pectoral fins clamped to the side of the body.
- Unresponsive to any stimulation.

9.2.2 Body

- Emaciation – the outline of the skeleton is visible through the epithelium (skin).
- Swelling of the whole body.
- Localised swelling.
- Scales raised all over the body. A patch of raised scales
- Any form of protrusion within the body that distorts the skin.
- Protrusion of the vent.

Abnormality compared with the normal Koi body shape for example a bend in the body or a koi that is heavily gravid (carrying eggs).

9.2.3 Skin

- Excessive mucus either general or in localised patches.
- Macro ecto-parasites visible with the naked eye such as Argulus (fish lice) or Lernaea (anchor worm).
- A large carp pox tumour on the body or fins. For this assessment, such a tumour will be recognised as a white or pink shiny growth.
- Skin lesions such a growth, cyst, abscess, ulcer, injury, blister, or other localised skin abnormality.
- Areas of fungal infection.
- A minor abrasion on the face due to contact with the transit bag when the correct position for transportation has not been adopted, could exclude a fish from show entry depending on the severity.
- Skin hyperaemia or redness can be due to transit and also disease and a rest period and later re-assessment is suggested if possible, so as to not exclude the koi unnecessarily.

Koi with completely healed scar tissue resulting from an injury will not be excluded from a show.

As per sections 2.1 and 7.3.9 Koi that have had cosmetic surgery of any kind should not be entered in a show. A koi entered with any signs of enhancement will be excluded from a show.

9.2.4 Vent

- A vent that is excessively inflamed (red)
- Bleeding from the vent.
- The vent appears abnormal.

9.2.5 Eyes

- Bilateral exophthalmia' (excessively protruding eyes)
- Unilateral exophthalmia (one eye protruding).
- Enophthalmia (sunken eyes)
- The cornea of the eye appears to be covered in either mucus or a film.

9.2.6 Mouth

- Dislocation of the jaw.
- Mouth unable to open or close normally.
- Mouth distortion.
- Injury, ulceration, swelling, inflammation (redness) in or around the mouth.

9.2.7 Gills

- Visible protrusion of the gill lamellae (filaments) from the gill cavity.
- Rapid excessive opercula movement.
- Prolonged gill haemorrhage
- Gill filaments that visibly are not red in colour.

9.2.8 Fins

- Hyperaemia (redness) in all or most fins can suggest health problem and may bar the koi from show entry.
- Rays protruding from a fin will prevent show entry
- All koi which have excessively frayed, or ragged fins will be excluded from the show
- Slight irregularity to the edges of the fins will not exclude a koi from a show although obvious cosmetic changes could bar the fish from entry.
- Hyperplasia – the outer fin edges are fused together will exclude koi from a show.
- Small clean splits in a fin with no sign of inflammation (redness) in the fin membrane will not exclude koi.

WATER QUALITY

10.1 Water regime

- 10.1.1 A water report must be obtained from the local water supplier well in advance of the show so any issues with its qualities and how it needs to be prepared for the show are known. The supplier can be contacted a few days before the date of the show to see if there are any changes in the water supply that might affect the show. If a show venue can only provide borehole water for show use rather than tap water, it must be a licensed borehole supplying potable water and this must still be tested for all parameters.
- 10.1.2 The Show Chairman is responsible for water quality in both the show and contingency vats throughout the show.
- 10.1.3 The following tests must be carried out on tap water prior to filling show vats or spare water storage vats. Total ammonia, nitrite, nitrate, chlorine, chloramine, KH, and pH. Aerating the water for a few hours before a test will give a more stable pH result. The local water supply report should reveal if there are heavy metals in the water that need removal.
- 10.1.4 Using a meter when filling show vats allows for the correct volume of dechlorinator. Some dechlorination products can make water testing less accurate particularly ammonia kits.
- 10.1.5 During the show the appropriate testing kits or electronic meters must be on site as well as a supply of reagents and calibration formulas. Electronic test meters must be calibrated and any relevant solutions and batteries available on site before the show opens.
- 10.1.6 Show organisers should select personnel experienced in water testing and the use of kits and meters. The collection of samples from vats has to be carried out taking biosecure precautions so as not to contaminate. It is vital to prevent hands and sampling containers contacting the vat water and disposable cups are one method and they can be marked to ensure vat numbers are not confused.

- 10.1.7 Vat water temperature is important for koi wellbeing. An infrared thermometer avoids water contact and contamination. Neither glass nor floating thermometers are suitable. Reasonable steps should be taken to minimise changes in water temperature. An increase of more than 1 degree in 2 hours on a hot day suggests shading may be required, and other provisions may be necessary depending on the weather and show conditions.
- 10.1.8 The variation in pH between the home pond and the show venue is unlikely to cause an adverse reaction in the koi unless the difference is considerable. In such cases the exhibitor is likely to be aware their pond pH is higher or lower than average and both the transit bag and the vat water can be tested using disposable cups. If required some vat water can be introduced to the bag while floating the fish in the vat so that the transition is gradual not sudden. Electronic pH testers are usually more reliable than kits and can easily be used in the disposable cups.
- 10.1.9 Electronic meters are usually more reliable than colorimetric test kits when testing water for total ammonia although they cannot distinguish between the two forms of ammonia. The accepted safe ammonia level is 0.5mg/L
- 10.1.10 Levels of nitrite should not exceed 0.2 mg/L. Electronic meters are recommended and if a test kit is used ensure it can read that low.
- 10.1.11 Dissolved oxygen levels should be maintained above 7.0 mg/L throughout the show. The levels in the vats should be checked when the vat covers are removed in the morning, and before being replaced at night and occasionally during the day. Checks should be more frequent in hot weather. Electronic oxygen meters are accurate although disinfecting the meters between vats damages the membranes and disposable cups can provide the hygiene required. The oxygen content of samples must be read away from the vat and the sample discarded never poured back into the vat. There are also reagent-based test dissolved oxygen kits that provide sufficiently accurate results.
- 10.1.12 All Show Vats should be tested for ammonia to maintain ammonia levels below 0.5mg/L and also for pH, and temperature at regular intervals according to an agreed schedule. Re-testing after a water change to see if the level is lower is a good practice keeping in mind koi will excrete ammonia after a water change. Additional water testing should be carried out as a precaution if any koi are unsettled, or the water looks oily or the KWO suggests it.
- 10.1.13 During a two day show testing for ammonia, pH, and temperature is suggested every 3 hours until a 50% water change in all vats is carried out at the end of the first day and the vats are covered for the night. The same regime is carried out on day two until all koi have been de-benched.
- 10.1.14 In order to maintain acceptable water quality throughout the duration of the show it is important not to overstock the vats - guidance is in Section 8.
- 10.1.15 Female fish carrying eggs are termed gravid and can be triggered to lay their eggs in vats due to the change of conditions or 'chasing' from males, this will increase the ammonia level in the vat and can discolour the water. Show organisers need to be prepared to provide additional attention to such vats. See Section 7.1.3
- 10.1.16 A full record of the show including equipment used, water test results, and other details should be kept in a show archive for future shows. Exhibitors may ask to see the water test results and these should be available if requested.

10.1.17 Ammonia and Show Vats

Koi excrete ammonia continually and in ponds biological filtration ensures this cannot build up to toxic levels, however this is impossible at Koi shows. Koi tolerate a little ammonia it is over exposure that should be prevented by controlling the level. In simple terms ionised ammonia or NH_4 is not as harmful to koi as un-ionised ammonia or NH_3 . Most testing methods give the total of both forms of ammonia and at shows it is easier to test for NH_3 and prevent it exceeding 0.5mg/L.

Ammonia is influenced by pH and at higher pH levels it can rise. Irrespective of pH higher water temperatures trigger an increase in the ammonia level. The preparation of koi for shows is a factor in ammonia accumulation and excess levels can be due to failure to withhold food for 5 days.

Pumping 25% or more water from vats when the ammonia rises and topping up with fresh water prepared for vat use is one method, others are dealt with in 10.3 & 10.4.

Maintaining aeration levels at a maximum helps to remove both ammonia and carbon dioxide and by preventing fluctuating conditions in the vats the koi are better supported. The use of zeolite can help reduce a sudden rise in ammonia caused by koi "dumping" ammonia. However, it soon stops working and needs discharging and this is impractical at shows, and it cannot be used if salt is used in the display vats.

10.2 Guidelines for show vat aeration

In all show vats the level of dissolved oxygen should be kept as high as possible for the wellbeing of the koi. The level should never be allowed to decrease below 7.0mg/L and therefore aeration by means of an air pump and air stones is essential. There are various influences on dissolved oxygen levels and higher water temperatures can deplete the level and testing is vital with a dissolved oxygen meter or test kit. Levels can vary with the conditions and vats will warm up faster than a pond in summer. At a water temperature of 30.C the level will be around 7.5 – 7.6 mg/L & at 25.C 8.1 – 8.2 mg/L & 20.C around 9.1mg/L. The introduction of any substance to a vat such as a dechlorination product could lower the dissolved oxygen level and may also interfere with water testing results. All such use should be agreed in advance, so all the vats are treated identically.

During judging the air stones should only be lifted out of the vat water by Centre Ring or show personnel so the koi can be fully observed, this short period will not cause an oxygen deficit. The air stones should not be handled by visitors or photographers to preserve the continuity of the oxygen supply, and the biosecurity of each individual vat as water droplets and hands can spread disease as well as koi.

10.3 Ammonia Binders

Ammonia binders were introduced to koi shows to reduce the volume of water changes required and to allow shows to be held in venues in which little water is available. Whilst suitable for a two day koi show, they are not intended for long-term use or to replace pond filtration systems. Ammonia binders are chemicals used in water to convert ammonia excreted by koi into a non-toxic substance. As the various brands do not share identical chemical formulations generalisation is impossible, and the directions for each brand must be fully adhered to.

Most pond water testing kits cannot be used with ammonia binders, those based on the salicylate method will work with some brands of ammonia binder. Most ammonia binders need stable water parameters as the pH can shift and ammonia could be created if conditions became unstable. Dissolved oxygen testing is important to ensure that the oxygen retention capacity of water is holding during a koi show and most electronic meters should still be effective. Although the aim is to use less water, some changes will keep the vats free of unwanted substances created by the koi.

Several countries in which koi shows are held are using ammonia binders and show organisers are recommended to read all the information provided by manufacturers in advance of a show. It is also advisable that experienced personnel monitor the use of ammonia binders during a show.

10.4 Pump and Trickle Systems for water at Koi Shows

The availability of water varies with the show venue creating options for show organisers. Ammonia and other waste substances have to be removed from show vats or the level lowered. Both pumped and trickle water systems require pipework to be set up to supply fresh water to all the vats and separate pipework to remove wastewater. The prime consideration is that the vats remain as biosecure as possible with no water contamination between any of the vats. A flow rate of water 1-2 litres per minute has been successful at keeping ammonia levels controlled although this will vary and large swings in water temperature must be avoided, or the level can rise. There are various plumbing methods and to ensure the systems are safe and effective guidance is recommended before implementing them. In some situations, water can be held in reservoirs and dechlorinated with a liquid product once the water volume is known to ensure accuracy. A pump is then used to transport the water through the pipework system as and when required or continuously if sufficient water is held in reserve for the duration of the show. When a mains supply of water is available a constant trickle system is possible and in this set up the water must first flow through dechlorinators of activated carbon. Depending on the number of show vats and their water volume the size and amount of dechlorinators needed will vary. An approximate guide of 1 dechlorinator for 2 vats has been found satisfactory depending on the size. Each dechlorinator should be tested 3 times per day for the duration of the show to ensure that no cartridge has exceeded its capacity to remove chlorine.

Water testing meters or kits that indicate the presence of both chlorine and chloramine in water samples should be in use at all koi shows to confirm the safety of the tap water. These kits should also be used to ensure that the activated carbon cartridges in dechlorinators have not exceeded their capacity to remove chlorine. Chloramine is traced by the regular testing of the show vats for ammonia.

Liquid dechlorination products should be used as per the label, using the correct amount is important, as they are less effective if the amount is inaccurate and some lower dissolved oxygen levels. Activated carbon dechlorinators should be used in accordance with the manufacturers recommend flow rates and activated carbon cartridges should be renewed as per the manufacturers guidelines. A record should be kept of the life of each cartridge so dechlorination is always fully effective. Between koi shows the activated carbon cartridges must be stored vertically.

11. ADVICE TO EXHIBITORS

11.1. It is recommended that the Show Committee provide exhibitors with copies of the advice below, including the Benching Health Criteria, and the criteria for the winning of designated Show Awards. This should be done well in advance of the show date in order that they may assess the health of their koi and prepare them for the show, and also be aware of what is required to take an Award.

11.2 SHOWING KOI

It is in the best interests of the well being of koi that they are not taken to numerous shows. They need to adapt to changes in their living conditions and a period of 30 days or longer in the home pond is important after each koi show to ensure they make the necessary adaptations. Health issues can arise when a koi keeper enters koi in a show having arranged for a koi dealer to purchase and deliver a koi for them direct to the showground. It is safer for any koi that is to be entered into a show to be quarantined by a koi dealer and then introduced to the home pond for at least 30 days before being taken to a koi show.

Koi keepers showing fish need to be aware that stress can be induced in koi for a variety of reasons and it can have a negative impact on their health. Therefore, it is vital to ensure that no koi is ever over exposed to any stressful situation. Being netted, transported and displayed in a vat that is not their natural environment can induce a level of stress and the time required for recovery will vary once back in their home pond. Welfare is paramount and any newly purchased koi that is to be shown must have been living in the home pond for 30 days as a precaution before being shown. To ensure wellbeing koi that have already been shown must have been back in their home pond for a minimum period of 30 days before being shown again .

General

11.2.1 The Exhibitor maintains full or joint responsibility for the care of their koi for the duration of the Koi Show. From the time when their koi are accepted into the Koi Show and until after the Koi Show has finished and the owner signs the de-benching form, the Show Committee must be able to contact the Exhibitor at all times, e.g. by mobile phone.

11.2.2 During benching, koi are examined thoroughly including those areas not visible in the home pond. To prevent imperfect koi being transported and to ensure only healthy koi are displayed the Exhibitor should check for signs that could exclude koi from competing as per the assessment list and, if there is any doubt, do not bring the koi to the Show. Health standards for show entry are in Benching Health Criteria section.

11.2.3 GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION & TRANSPORTATION OF KOI TO SHOWS

All koi that are to be entered into a Koi Show should have been in the owner's pond for a minimum of one month, and longer is better for the koi.

The rest period after every show for all koi is a minimum of 30 days, and longer is better to reduce the likelihood of stress, as this can predispose koi to health problems.

Before taking koi to a show, ensure their behaviour is normal and there is no lethargy, irritation, or sitting on the pond floor. Externally there should be no swelling, redness, raised scales or excessive mucus.

If koi for exhibiting have to be treated for a parasitic infection, this should be carried out at least a month before the date of the show. Chemicals such as formalin and potassium permanganate remove the mucus layer, and this is part of the koi immune response. It is safer not to subject koi to transit and new conditions whilst their mucus protection is missing as koi are vulnerable until it regenerates.

The koi should not be fed for at least 5 days prior to the show although they will still eat natural food from the pond. Being well prepared reduces toxins in the transit bag and ammonia levels in the show vat and is better for the koi.

Before the day of the show, collect all of the items required to hand. Cardboard, polystyrene, or plastic containers, and transit bags for the size of the koi to be shown, as well as spare bags and elastic bands. A koi dealer may be able to supply these items. Cable ties and tape are unsafe. Oxygen will also be needed or an air pump and a suitably sized net and handling sock if appropriate.

On the day the koi are to travel to the Show ground examine each koi again as they are netted to ensure koi they are in peak condition before placing them in a bag as they have to satisfy show entry criteria at the show ground. See 9.2.

Fill the bag with the water the fish normally lives in, sufficient to cover the gills, and do not add any calming product to the transit bag.

The bag holding koi should be double bagged for transit in case of leaks and one koi per bag is recommended in the larger sizes.

Place one plastic transit bag inside another and fold the outer one down to form a cuff. The inner bag is filled with the pond water the koi to be shown lives in to a level that covers the gills. Do not add any calming product to the transit bag.

Once the koi is in the bag inflate it with oxygen or use an airline from an air pump. Do not blow into the bag as this will not oxygenate the water.

The bag should be held as it fills to trap the oxygen and should be rigid when inflated. The top of the bag should be twisted several times, then folded over and secured with an elastic band and the outer bag secured in the same way.

The bagged koi should be placed in a container with a lid or cover, so the fish travels in the dark. The container when placed parallel across the axle prevents any side-to-side roll. This does not apply to a bag of smaller koi that can turn freely in the bag.

Transporting koi to and from shows in containers on trailers is allowed if the container has been specifically designed to protect the fish from the uncontrolled movement of the water that transit creates as this can cause damage.

Exhibitors should ensure that their transit bags and containers are placed in their vehicle after the fish have been accepted into the show to ensure that their koi travel home in the same bags and containers as a biosecurity precaution unless there is a designated storage area away from the koi vats .

At the Showground Exhibitors must stay until their koi have been benched and signed for and a telephone number provided in case the Show Chairman or Benching team need to make contact.

Any concerns about implementing the guidelines can be discussed with the Show Organisers.

12. BENCHING AND DEBENCHING PROCEDURES

Scope

This document defines good practice in managing the benching, movement and debenching of koi at Koi Shows and is best practice in conjunction with the accompanying Show Rules and Guidelines for Two Day Koi Shows. It covers the time from when the owner announces the arrival of the koi to the Vat Allocation Officer at the Centre Ring, to the departure of the koi from the Showground

Personnel

The benching of koi at a show involves two teams of people.

The first team known as the ADMINISTRATION TEAM is involved with the paperwork side of the show entries.

The second team is known as the HANDLING TEAM and deals with all aspects of the physical handling and moving of koi.

The roles described below can be performed by any number of people except where specific guidance is given.

A DEBENCHING TEAM will be required after the show and will often be the same as the Handling Team. It is recommended that one person, the Head Bencher, is made responsible for managing all members of the Administration, Handling, and Debenching teams, collectively called the Benching Team.

All personnel must be competent to undertake the tasks assigned to them and those actually handling koi experienced in doing so.

Administration Team The roles within the Administration Team are:

Vat Allocation Officer who will advise entrants which vat they have been allocated in the show ring. Entrants report back to them with the time they floated their travel bags so that the appropriate equalisation time can be calculated. Should a show vat be overstocked they will be responsible to find a satisfactory conclusion in conjunction with the responsible KWO. In case of disputes, this role may involve liaison with other people i.e. Show Chairman.

Photographer who will record a photograph of the whole body of the koi being benched which shows distinguishing markings for identification and judging purposes.

Information Recorder who will collate the show entry form with the allocated show vat and will be present at all times during the benching of that vat. The Handler will give the information regarding show size and classification to the Recorder who will repeat the information back to the Handler ensuring that the correct information goes to the person responsible for Data Entry. It is also the duty of the Recorder to make sure that the points system is implemented for the number/size of entries in the vat according to the Show Rules and Guidelines. If the vat is overstocked, the koi cannot be accepted into the show and the Recorder must report this to the Vat Allocation person for a suitable outcome to be found.

Data Entry Officer who will administer the data for each koi entered into the show. This will be done manually in a paper-based system or via computer. The method used will collate the information from the Recorder into a system that will produce the relevant paperwork to control Koi entries and movements and facilitate judging See Section 7 – Judging Standards.

For Administration Teams that utilise software products such as Koi Show Pro (aka KSP) the functions of Photographer, Information Recorder and Data Entry Officer are combined.

Handling Team who should normally consist of three people (minimum two people), who are trained in the process of BENCHING. This team is directly involved in the well-being of Koi and therefore must have a sound and practical knowledge in the techniques used in BOWLING, DE-BAGGING from TRAVEL BAGS, HANDLING AND NETTING OF KOI. Koi shows are not the place for the teaching of these skills, and therefore training should be obtained prior to the show.

The roles of the Handling Team are-

Netter who will guide the koi towards the bowl used for benching.

Bowler who will get the koi into the bowl in the prescribed manner.

Handling Team who will size, classify, and inspect the koi and pass the relevant information to the Recorder. They will then ask the Recorder to repeat the information back for clarity.

The function of Bowler and Handling Team are often undertaken by the same person.

Debenching Team

The roles of the Debenching Team are-

Debenching Controller who will ensure that koi are only debenched by authorised persons at authorised times. During debenching the owner or authorised agent can be accepted as Handler or Bagger.

Handler who will gather the koi in bowl or net as appropriate ready for bagging.

Bagger who will place the koi into the bag or suitable travel container.

Equipment

The following equipment should be made available for the Handling Team, and it is the responsibility of the Handling Team to ensure that equipment is fit for the purpose intended. It is the Show Chairman's responsibility to ensure that adequate equipment has been made available to the Handling Team as follows:

Suitable vat(s) for disinfecting benching equipment.

Suitable vat(s) for rinsing disinfected equipment.

Contingency vat(s) which is/are suitable for the temporary accommodation of koi which, for whatever reason, are not able to be entered directly into the show. Contingency vat(s) should be available, at all times, within reasonable distance of the show ring when koi are on site.

Sufficient pan nets of different sizes for example:

Small pan nets approx 50-60cm (20-24") diameter for use with koi size 3 and under.

Large pan nets approx 70cm (28") diameter for use with koi size 4 and above.

Benching bowls and all measuring equipment used must be checked to ensure reasonable accuracy and constancy of sizing.

Suitable hand disinfecting products.

Disposable paper towelling.

Any additional hygiene or bio-security equipment agreed by the show committee in accordance with these Show Rules and Guidelines.

Long hair must be tied up to stop it falling into the vat during Benching or Netting.

Rings and Watches must be removed if koi are being handled.

Administration

Prior to the start of benching, the Show Chairman must inform the Head Bencher and/or the full Benching Team of the system in place for booking vats in advance and the system in place for managing overstocking of show vats. The systems should be in accordance with the guidance of these Show Rules and Guidelines.

On arrival at the showground, the owner of the koi (or their agent) must report to the Vat Allocation official, parking their vehicle in the designated place.

The owner should float his travel bags in the show vat allocated and report the time the floating process began to the Vat Allocation Official so that the correct benching process can begin.

When the appropriate time for the temperature equalisation has elapsed, the owner will be instructed that they can open the transit bags, or the owner can delegate the task to the Handling Team. This period will be approximately 20 minutes. However, this will vary with the temperature and conditions under which the koi have travelled and may be reduced if the temperature of the "home" pond, transit bag and the show vat are similar. The Handling Team or owner can then remove the koi from their transit bags. No water from the transit bag should enter the show vat. Waste water must be disposed of as instructed by the Administration Team as agreed with the site groundsman.

Once the koi are swimming freely in the Show Vat, they will be ready to be benched into the show.

Judging Documentation

Documentation must be provided for judges, either electronically on a tablet, or in paper form to indicate which koi in which vat is benched in each class. The judging documentation must allow judges to identify each koi and must allow recording of the results. Judging documentation must not identify the owner of the koi.

There is no recommended specific format for judging documentation, however, a suitable documentation system would comprise:

Separate page(s) showing the koi entries for each Class of size and variety

For Best in Size, a summary document showing 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prize winners in each variety in that size.

For special prizes, a list of koi or vats that are eligible. The criteria for awarding these special prizes must be notified to the JST and exhibitors prior to the Show commencing.

A result sheet for Major prizes - Best Baby, Best Young, Best Adult, Best Mature, and Grand Champion.

The Start of Benching

The aim of the Benching Team is to quickly and correctly identify the show classification, size classification and the eligibility on health grounds of the koi for entry into the show. With this method, ineligible koi and koi with any indication of a possible health problem, (as described in Section 9.2), will be detected before entry into the show. The owner (or their agent) must be present during the whole of the benching process and until all the koi are accepted into the show. The advice on selecting koi and their preparation for travel should ensure that koi arrive at the show ground in peak condition. However, in the unlikely event that a koi cannot be benched for any reason, the fish can be housed in a contingency vat until the end of the Koi Show subject to facilities being available. If the proximity of the Exhibitor's home to the showground allows, it may be preferable for the koi to be returned to the home pond

An appropriate official must be in attendance to monitor compliance with requirements of the Animal Welfare Act as set out in these Show Rules and Guidelines. Attendance of a member of the Koi Welfare Team fulfils this requirement.

Members of the Administration and Handling Teams should not bench their own koi. If an alternative team member is not available, then a suitable independent person should act as a witness that the benching was performed and recorded correctly.

All nets and bowls and other equipment should be inspected, made safe and disinfected prior to Benching. Nets, bowls, and the hands of those benching must be disinfected and rinsed between vats containing koi from different owners or different ponds.

The Benching Process

Inspecting, Measuring and Classification for Show Entry

The Netter guides the koi towards the bowl. The Bowler gets the koi into the bowl as described below. Handling of large koi (size 5 and above) should be minimised.

The Bowler should hold a disinfected bowl vertically in the water, with an imaginary line between the top and the bottom edges of the bowl being at 90 degrees to the water surface. The Netter then places the net under the body of the chosen Koi, without actually touching the koi and guides it towards the vertical bowl. As the koi swims into the bowl, the bottom of the net should all but touch the bottom outside lip of the bowl. The bowl is then gently raised from the vertical into the horizontal position. The net should remain in position for as long as necessary to ensure that the koi remains in the bowl. In this way, the koi is bowled with little or no contact with either bowl or net. The Handler now moves into position and tips water from the bowl until a comfortable working depth is achieved. The minimum water depth in the bowl during benching is that sufficient to cover the koi's gills.

The Handler, working with both hands in the water will gently hold the koi at the side of measuring bowl and carefully raise the tail so that ventral region may be observed. The tail is then lowered, and the front of the koi raised to expose the face jaw and mouth to the Welfare Official. The Handler then gently ensures that the abdomen of the koi is normal. Any abnormality should be reported to the KWO. This observation should take a matter of seconds and cause no distress to the koi but ensures that all koi are in good condition for entering the show. If necessary, koi can be placed in a clear plastic bag with sufficient water to cover, the body and the bag lifted to allow inspection of the underside of the body.

After inspection, koi are measured and classified. Whilst measuring the koi must be in the normal swimming position with the nose just touching the measuring bowl. All koi are to be given a measurement, which may be rounded down to the nearest 1 cm if the measurement is solely for calculating stocking rates. It is good practice to record the sizes rounded down to the nearest 0.5 cm for the largest size koi and those close to the upper and lower class size limits for judging purposes.

Once the handler has agreed the size and classification, it can be relayed to the Information Recorder who should repeat the information back to the Handler for confirmation. In this way, errors can be detected and minimised before the paperwork is further processed.

Note: The entire Benching team should listen to the information to double check that the Handler is correct, and the Recorder has repeated the correct information back to the Handler.

Photographing Koi:

The whole body and any distinguishing features should be clearly visible in all photographs. A suitable system for linking each photograph with the individual koi benching administration record should be in place. If the owner brings his or her own photograph, these may be used at the discretion of the benching team.

Once this benching process is completed, the koi should be released back into the vat by tilting the bowl and allowing it to swim free.

The Recorder should follow the protocol for overstocking as advised by the Show Chairman and agreed with the KWO.

If the show vat is overstocked, the Recorder should inform the owner and the details should be given to the Vat Allocation Official so that a satisfactory conclusion can be made in agreement with the KWO present.

When all the koi in the vat are benched and any potential overstocking is resolved, the show entry form should be signed by the Information Recorder and the owner (or their agent) to signify that benching has been completed.

De-benching of Koi from the show

No koi are to be debenched until the authority to debench has been given. It will usually be the Show Chairman who will make the decision to commence debenching based on various factors. This should include the safety aspect of vehicular access whilst members of the public are present on the show ground.

Vehicular access to the showground or the show ring area must be authorised and controlled once the permission for debenching is given.

The benching/show entry form must be produced to the Debenching Controller who will authorise and give written permission for the owner or authorised agent to debench their koi from the show vat. The owner or authorised agent will then be responsible for netting, bowling, and bagging their koi and for asking for assistance from the Debenching Team if needed. If show equipment is used for debenching, it must be correctly disinfected between each use by different owners. The owner or authorised agent must confirm with the Debenching Team that disinfection of any borrowed equipment has been satisfactorily completed.

All transit bags should be inflated with oxygen and the koi should leave the showground as per the transportation requirements in these Show Rules and Guidelines.

The owner or authorised agent must produce the written permission to debench if this is requested by a show official.

Procedures for a one-day koi show.

With the exception of the night time procedures covered in 10.1.19 these procedures equally apply to a one-day show.

Acknowledgements to those contributing to these Show Guidelines

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The Koi Policy Group