**Part G – Ferrets**

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| **Condition** | **Guidance** | **Condition met**  **YES / NO** | **Officers Notes** |
| **5.0 Suitable Environment** |  Businesses must prevent risk of injury, illness and escape. |  |  |
|  |  Slatted, grid or wire mesh floors must not be used in ferret housing. |  |  |
| **Environmental conditions, including sizes** |  See the minimum enclosure sizes that must be followed. |  |  |
|  |  Housing needs to be of sufficient size to allow all the ferrets housed to be able to lie fully outstretched in any direction, run, forage, explore or play, as well as to stand fully upright without touching the roof of the enclosure. |  |  |
|  |  Ferrets must be provided with constant access to places to hide. As a minimum, each hiding place must be large enough to allow one ferret to rest alone. |  |  |
| **Bedding and substrate** |  Sleeping areas need to be dry, draught-free, well ventilated and clean as well as large enough to allow all the ferrets housed to rest together fully outstretched, turn around unimpeded and move around comfortably. Appropriate bedding materials include good quality dust-free hay or shredded paper, or fabric items that can be laundered (although these must be monitored for chewing or damage and removed and replaced as necessary). |  |  |
|  |  Ferrets must be provided with a suitable substrate in sufficient amounts to allow foraging and other behaviours. Suitable litter materials include dust-free wood shavings, supplemented with dust-free hay. |  |  |
|  |  Sawdust and sand are not suitable as either nesting or litter materials.. |  |  |
| **Temperature** |  Ambient temperature should be no lower than 12°C and no higher than 26°C. |  |  |
|  |  In very hot weather, cooling procedures must be in place, such as, but not limited to, fans to increase air movement, ice packs or air conditioning. |  |  |
|  |  In cold temperatures, extra nesting material must be provided, unless alternative temperature control is provided, for example heating. |  |  |
| **Light** |  Ferrets need to experience appropriate light: dark cycles (minimum of 8 hours light and 16 hours dark; this is not to exceed 16 hours light and 8 hours dark). |  |  |
|  | **Minimum enclosure sizes for ferrets**   |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Type | Maximum Stocking density | Minimum floor area (m²) | Dimensions (m)  Width x length | Minimum dimension (m) | Minimum cage height (m) | | Ferret under 12 weeks | 1 to 4 | 1 | 1 x 1  Or  1.66 x 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | | Ferret older than 12 weeks | 1 | 0.6 | 1 x 0.6  Or  0.77 x 0.77 | 0.6 | 0.6 | |  |  |
| **Toileting** |  Ferrets require space for their toilet area removed from their sleeping or eating areas. Litter trays can be placed in this area to assist with cleaning. |  |  |
| **Housing and competition** |  There must be at least one hiding place for each ferret housed within an enclosure and there must be 2 entrance or exit points to prevent monopolisation. |  |  |
| **Required Higher Standards for Providing a Suitable Environment for Ferrets** |  Carriers must open from the top to facilitate removal of the animal, cardboard carriers are not advised as they are easily chewed and can become damp. Carriers can be lined with newspaper and some bedding material, for example, good quality dust-free hay or shredded paper can be provided for comfort. |  |  |
| **6.0 Suitable Diet** |  |  |  |
| **Diet** |  All ferrets must be fed a suitable, complete ferret diet, provided at appropriate intervals. |  |  |
|  |  Ferrets must not be fed dog or cat food, as these contain cereal and plant proteins which ferrets are unable to digest. For the same reason, bread or cereals must also not be given to ferrets. |  |  |
|  |  Ferrets mustn’t be given anything that contains small bones, excluding day old chicks. |  |  |
| **Monitoring** |  A vet must be consulted if there is no improvement in poor intake or anorexia within 24 hours of onset or if the condition of the individuals deteriorates. |  |  |
| **Water** |  Where water is supplied in bowls they must be heavy based. |  |  |
| **Optional Higher Standards for Ferrets’ Diet** |  Treat foods must include cooked meat scraps and hard boiled eggs. Treats can be given in moderation and as appropriate to the individual ferret. |  |  |
| **7.0 Monitoring of behaviour and training of animals** |  |  |  |
| **Enrichment** |  There must be environmental enrichment in all enclosures. |  |  |
|  |  Ferrets must not be given enrichment made of rubber, due to the risk of ingestion leading to intestinal blockages if chewed and swallowed. |  |  |
| **Exercise** |  Ferrets need access to an area in which to exercise. |  |  |
| **Required Higher Standards for Monitoring Ferrets’ Behaviour and Training** |  Dietary enrichment must be used. For example, nuggets can be scattered around the enclosure, fed in puzzle feeders or hidden in paper bags or cardboard tubes. Where puzzle feeders or dispensers are used, ferrets must be monitored to ensure they can access the food. |  |  |
| **8.0 Animal Handling and Interactions** |  |  |  |
| **Handling** |  Ferrets must not be lifted using only one hand. |  |  |
| **Interactions** |  Ferrets must be housed in single-sex groups or pairs, ideally comprising of littermates or individuals introduced as juveniles. |  |  |
|  |  Being induced ovulators, adult jills must be prevented from remaining in season to mitigate oestrogen related diseases. Veterinary advice must be sought about reproductive management. This must be documented and the reproductive issues explained to prospective purchasers. |  |  |
| **Required Higher Standards for Interactions with Ferrets** |  Where ferrets have to be housed singly, they must be provided with extra sources of enrichment. A plan must be in place for all singly housed ferrets. |  |  |
| **9.0 Protection from Pain, Suffering, Injury and Disease** |  |  |  |
| **Preventative Treatment** |  The purchaser must be advised that ferrets should be vaccinated against canine distemper, usually at 6 to 8 weeks of age and again at 10 to 12 weeks old, thereafter annually but as per manufacturer’s recommendations. |  |  |
| **Checking** |  Ferrets nails must be checked regularly to ensure they do not become overgrown. |  |  |

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| **Higher standards (Required) Ferrets** | Standards Met Yes/No |
| Carriers must open from the top to facilitate removal of the animal, cardboard carriers are not advised as they are easily chewed and can become damp. Carriers can be lined with newspaper and some bedding material, for example, good quality dust-free hay or shredded paper can be provided for comfort. |  |
| Dietary enrichment must be used. For example, nuggets can be scattered around the enclosure, fed in puzzle feeders or hidden in paper bags or cardboard tubes. Where puzzle feeders or dispensers are used, ferrets must be monitored to ensure they can access the food. |  |
| Where ferrets have to be housed singly, they must be provided with extra sources of enrichment. A plan must be in place for all singly housed ferrets. |  |
| **Higher Standards (Optional)** 50% required | Standards met Yes/No |
| Treat foods must include cooked meat scraps and hard boiled eggs. Treats can be given in moderation and as appropriate to the individual ferret. |  |