



AS IT IS

## French Company Stops Selling Tiny Fishbowls

January 26, 2022

The big French pet care company AgroBiothers Laboratoire will no longer sell very small containers for raising fish.

The company has a 27 percent share of the French market for products used by people who raise animals at home. But it said it would no longer sell any **aquariums** that hold less than 15 liters of water. They will only offer rectangular ones.

The company said it was animal abuse to put fish in small bowls without added oxygen and filtration. Filtration is the process of removing small particles or waste from the water with a device.

AgroBiothers chief Matthieu Lambeaux recently spoke to the Reuters news agency. He used the term impulse – meaning a sudden strong desire to do something – to describe why many adults buy goldfish.

"People buy a goldfish for their kids on impulse," he said. Lambeaux added, "but if they knew what a torture it is, they would not do it. Turning round and round in a small bowl drives fish crazy and kills them quickly."

Gold fish can live up to 30 years and grow to about 25 cm in large aquariums or outdoor ponds. But in very small bowls they often die within weeks or months.

Lambeaux said gold fish are social animals that need other fish, lots of space and clean water. He added that having an aquarium requires some special equipment and knowledge.

France is Europe's number one market for red aquarium fish, with about 2.3 million fish, Lambeaux said.

In earlier years, AgroBiothers sold about 50,000 fish bowls per year at about 20 euros each.

Germany and several other European countries have long banned fish bowls, but France has no laws on the issue.

Lambeaux believes the use of fish bowls to be an anachronism – something that seems to belong to the past.

He explained the company's decision further by saying, "We cannot educate all our customers to explain that keeping fish in a bowl is cruel. We consider that it is our responsibility to no longer give **consumers** that choice."

Lambeaux suggested that the reality of fishbowls is sad.

"There is demand for fish bowls," he said, "but the reality is that what we offer children is the possibility to see gold fish die slowly."

I'm John Russell.

*Geert de Clercq reported on this story for Reuters. John Russell adapted it for VOA Learning English.*

---

## Words in This Story

**aquarium** – n. a glass or plastic container in which fish and other water animals and plants can live

**consumer** – n. a person who buys goods and services