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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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**TURTLES: HEALTH ADVISORY SHEET**

(Pursuant to 1988 Public Act 424)

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**PURPOSE**

1. Pursuant to Federal Law (Title 21 *Code of Federal Regulations* 1240.62), the sale of viable turtle eggs or live turtles with a carapace (shell) length less than four inches is generally prohibited in both interstate and intrastate commerce.
2. All viable turtle eggs or turtles with a carapace length of less than four inches sold in Michigan under one of the exemptions in the Federal Law must be accompanied with this Health Advisory Sheet. One exemption allows for sale of small turtles for bona fide scientific, educational, or exhibition purposes. **Small turtles are not to be used as pets. The sale of small turtles as pets is illegal.** Other exemptions are for export only and non-business purpose. (Refer to Federal Law for details.)
3. Salmonella infection (salmonellosis) is commonly associated with turtles. **Children have contracted salmonella from exposure to small turtles.** This Health Advisory Sheet describes the potential risk to children and adults of contracting salmonellosis from turtles.

**TURTLES AND SALMONELLA**

1. Infected turtles look healthy but still carry the disease and pass the disease on to humans. There is no effective way to make turtles permanently salmonella-free. Even turtles treated with antibiotics can carry salmonella.
2. Signs of salmonellosis in humans include fever, headache, stomach cramps, diarrhea, and vomiting. The disease can be especially severe in infants and the elderly. Salmonellosis can cause death. If you, a family member, or a person in your classroom or laboratory experience symptoms of illness as described, be sure to inform your physician that you have a turtle and may have salmonellosis.
3. To help prevent contracting salmonella from your turtle, take the following precautions:
  - Do not allow the turtle or the turtle's water near your mouth.
  - Wash hands thoroughly after touching the turtle or the turtle's cage or water.
  - Change the turtle's water frequently.
  - Do not change the water in the same location where food is prepared for human consumption.
  - Do not feed the turtle raw meat or anything containing raw eggs.

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