

The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS)

Advice to veterinary surgeons in GB: dogs and cats

18 Jan 2007

Introduction

- European Regulation 998/2003 took effect on 3 July 2004. It sets out the rules for pet animals travelling between European Union (EU) countries and into the EU from other countries.
- This fact sheet contains advice on the veterinary requirements for preparing dogs (including guide and hearing dogs) and cats (“pets”) to travel under the Regulation. It replaces “*Advice to veterinary surgeons in GB: dogs and cats*” dated March 2005.
- There is a separate fact sheet for vets on the preparation of ferrets under the Regulation (dated October 2005).
- Defra, in conjunction with the Devolved Authorities, also produces fact sheets for pet owners travelling with their dogs and cats, ferrets and pet rabbits and rodents to and from other EU countries, and from non-EU countries to the UK. Please advise your clients to get the appropriate fact sheets from one of the Defra, Scottish Executive or NAWDEPC contact points in part 4.

PART 1. THE RULES

To **re-enter the UK without quarantine** from a country listed in Annex A, a pet must, in this order, be microchipped, vaccinated against rabies and blood tested. It must also be issued with an EU pet passport and treated against ticks and tapeworms. These procedures are explained in part 2.

For pets travelling **from the UK to other countries** see part 3.

There are no requirements for pets travelling directly between the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

The 6 month rule for entering the UK

An animal may not enter or re-enter the UK under PETS until 6 calendar months have passed from the date that the blood sample which gave a satisfactory test result was taken. For example, if a blood sample is taken on 1 January, the animal can enter the UK from 1 July. Pets require only one satisfactory blood test and 6 month wait **provided** the subsequent rabies booster vaccinations are given by the required date.

Rules on travelling to the UK and veterinary procedures in other countries are explained in the fact sheets on dogs and cats for pet owners.

The rules are to protect human and animal health and to reduce the risk of importing rabies into the UK. Animals not meeting all the rules must be licensed into quarantine.

What vets can do

Any registered veterinary surgeon can microchip, vaccinate and arrange blood testing and record the details of microchipping and the vaccination in the passport. They can also carry out, record and verify the tick and tapeworm treatment. In Great Britain, only Panel 2 Local Veterinary Inspectors (LVI) may complete the boxes in section IV of the passport headed “Authorised Veterinarian” to verify the details given about the rabies vaccination. Panel 2 LVIs must also complete all details required in section V on the blood test. The guidance accompanying the passport explains these responsibilities in more detail.

PART 2. PROCEDURES

(a) Microchip identification

We recommend that the microchip conforms to ISO Standard 11784 or Annex A to ISO Standard 11785. If it doesn't, it may be impossible to read it when the animal is checked in another PETS country. The pet owner is then required to provide a microchip reader to enable it to be read.

Reading a microchip

We recommend that you obtain a suitable microchip reader before offering the PETS service to clients so that animals can be properly identified when the following procedures are carried out. If using a client's microchip reader, test it first against an inanimate object to ensure it does not give a reading.

If a microchip cannot be read, you should not proceed until the problem is resolved. If you cannot read a microchip, contact your local Animal Health Divisional Office (AHDO) to ask if they have a different type of reader you can borrow.

Fitting a microchip

An animal must be microchipped *before* it is vaccinated against rabies. Check that the microchip can be read before and after it has been fitted. Record the microchip number on the vaccination record and passport. **This must be done by reading the microchip and not on the basis of any accompanying documentation. The microchip must be read before any subsequent entry is made in the passport.**

(b) Rabies vaccination

- Your pet must be vaccinated against rabies in accordance with the recommendation of the **vaccine manufacturer's data sheet**
- An authorised inactivated vaccine must be used. There are currently 4 authorised rabies vaccines in the UK: *Rabisin*, *Nobivac Rabies*, *Quantum Rabies* and *Canigen Rabies*.
- Before vaccinating the animal, you *must* check that its microchip can be read and that the number matches your records or other accompanying documentation. You can vaccinate any time *after* the microchip has been fitted.
- If an animal has been vaccinated before it was microchipped, it will have to be vaccinated again.

Record of vaccination

Enter the following details on the pet's vaccination record and in section IV of the passport:

- vaccine manufacturer and product name
- batch number
- date of vaccination
- the date by which the booster vaccination must be given (calculated by reference to the validity period of the vaccine given in the vaccine manufacturer's data sheet).
- An LVI must then stamp and sign the passport

Revaccination (boosters)

After an animal has been vaccinated, it must be given booster vaccinations to remain qualified for PETS. This must be done by the "Valid until" date on the animal's passport, third country official veterinary certificate (*see (d) below*) or PETS certificate and recorded in section IV of the passport. The revaccination interval for cats may be different to that for dogs (refer to the vaccine manufacturer's data sheet). Read the microchip, and check the number matches your records and the pet's documentation, before revaccination.

If an animal has not been revaccinated by the valid until date, it will have to be vaccinated and, for re-entry to the UK, then blood tested again. Record in section XI of the passport that the details in section V are no longer valid for entry to the UK. For a form of words see the guidance notes on completing a passport on the PETS website (see "What vets need to do").

The details in section V headed "In case of a further test" must then be completed by an LVI. Please advise the pet owner that the animal will have to wait 6 calendar months from the date a blood sample was taken that gave a

satisfactory result following revaccination before it may enter the UK under PETS. See also part 3 on the 21 day wait before travelling to other EU countries.

(c) Blood testing (*only necessary if an animal is re-entering the UK, entering Malta or, from a country other than the UK, the Republic of Ireland*)

The blood test can be done either before the pet leaves the UK or after it has travelled to a listed country, unless it is required for entry to that country. Before taking the sample, read the microchip and check the number matches your records and the pet's documentation.

The vaccine manufacturer's data sheet will show the best time for a blood sample to be taken after vaccination. You may wish to give your client a signed record of the date the sample was taken with the microchip number correctly stated.

Where the blood sample is analysed

The blood sample must be analysed at an EU-approved laboratory. An analysis carried out before the recognition date of the laboratory is not acceptable. You can get a list of all approved laboratories from the PETS website, Helpline or Scottish Executive.

Ask the laboratory for the correct submission form and advice on labelling and delivery of the sample. Make sure that the microchip number and date the sample was taken are accurately and clearly recorded on the submission form.

Blood test result

A satisfactory test result must show that the rabies neutralising antibody titre was equal to or greater than 0.5 IU/ml. The test result must show the animal's correct microchip number and the date the blood sample was taken. If it does not, ask the laboratory for one that does. Give your client a certified copy of the result and keep the original at your practice. Section V of the passport should then be completed by an LVI.

Failed blood tests

If an animal fails the blood test, the test must be repeated. The animal may first need to be revaccinated depending on your advice to the client. The 6 calendar month wait before entering the UK starts from the date that a subsequent blood sample that gave a satisfactory result was taken.

Further blood tests

No further blood tests are required following a satisfactory result **provided** the animal is revaccinated on time. See **(b)** if the revaccination date has been missed.

(d) EU pet passport

Issuing a passport

Passports can be issued before the expiry date of PETS certificates although PETS certificates may be used to re-enter the UK, and to enter certain other EU countries, until their "Valid until" date.

Passports may be issued after a pet has been first microchipped and then vaccinated against rabies (*but see part 3, EU countries*). To enter the UK, a pet must also have had a satisfactory blood test result (*see (c) above*) and a current treatment for ticks and tapeworms at the time of return (*see (e) below*).

A passport may only be issued for an animal if all of the following requirements are met:

- it shows no clinical signs of rabies
- its microchip can be read and the same number is shown on the vaccination record and blood test result
- it has a current rabies vaccination given after it was microchipped (*but see part 3, EU countries*)

For pets which have had a blood test:

- the test result must show the rabies neutralising antibody titre at a level of 0.5IU/ml or greater.

Further information on completing the passport is given in the guidance notes on the PETS website (see "What vets need to do").

A fully completed PETS certificate may be used as the basis for completing a passport, provided the animal has a current rabies vaccination.

An official veterinary certificate headed "*Veterinary certificate for pet dogs, cats and ferrets entering the European Community for non-commercial movements (Regulation (EC) No 998/2003)*" issued in a non-EU **listed** country is also acceptable as the basis for issuing a passport. It must be accompanied by the animal's vaccination record and blood test result, both of which must show the animal's microchip number. The animal must have been revaccinated against rabies by the "Valid until" date in section IV. See part 2b if this date has been missed. Listed countries are shown in Annex A.

Using a passport

A passport may not be used to enter the UK under PETS until 6 calendar months have passed from the date the blood sample which gave a satisfactory test result was taken. Pets must also have a current treatment for

ticks and tapeworms at the time of return. For travelling from the UK to other EU countries, see part 3.

Owners can continue to use the passport for their pet to enter the UK **provided** the pet is revaccinated by the “Valid until” date in section IV.

Updating or renewing the passport

A Panel 2 LVI must sign and stamp section IV each time a booster vaccination is given (*see part 2(b) if the date is missed*). When the passport is full, a new one should be issued.

If a passport is lost, a new one can be issued on the basis of supporting evidence (vaccination record and blood test result both showing the animal’s microchip number which must be read and checked against the number on the supporting documentation).

(e) Treatment against ticks and tapeworms

Before re-entering the UK under PETS, animals must be treated by a vet against ticks and the tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis*.

The treatment must be carried out not less than 24 hours and not more than 48 hours before the pet is checked-in to travel back into the UK. It must be done **every time** a pet enters the UK. You will only need to administer this treatment to animals leaving the UK on short trips when it must be given before departure to meet the timing requirement.

The animal’s microchip number must be read before treatment and match the number in section III of the passport.

Treatment

The tapeworm treatment must contain *praziquantel* and be administered in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.

The tick treatment must be a veterinary product which has marketing authorisation in the country of use and is licensed for use against ticks. A tick collar is not acceptable.

Recording the treatment

Sections VI and VII of the passport must be completed to certify that the treatment has been administered. Fill in the name of the manufacturer and product, the *date* and *time* of treatment (using the 24 hour clock), and sign and stamp the passport with the practice stamp.

You can continue to issue tick and tapeworm certificates (PETS 2) for pets with valid PETS certificates travelling on day trips to any listed country.

PART 3. TAKING PETS OUT OF GB

EU countries

To travel from the UK to another EU country, a pet must be microchipped (although some countries accept a tattoo), vaccinated against rabies (although Sweden does not require this when a pet travels direct from the UK) and issued with an EU pet passport. Malta has additional entry requirements and to enter Sweden a pet must be treated for tapeworms with a product containing praziquantel no more than 10 days before entry. Pet owners should be advised to contact their local Animal Health Divisional Office or the authorities (e.g. the Embassy) of the country they wish to enter to check the requirements. There are no requirements for pets travelling directly between the UK and the Republic of Ireland. For rules to re-enter the UK see parts 1 and 2.

- ***21 day wait***

For EU countries where more stringent entry requirements do not apply, the EU has introduced a wait of 21 days from the date of the first rabies vaccination before a pet can enter those EU countries. However, if the vaccine manufacturer's datasheet requires more than one vaccination to complete the primary vaccination protocol, the 21 day wait applies from the date of the final vaccination of that protocol.

Booster vaccinations are valid for entry from the date given **provided** they are given on time.

Owners can use an EU pet passport to take their pet into another EU country and certain non-EU listed countries. They can also use a valid PETS certificate to enter certain other EU countries. No PETS 1, PETS 5 certificates or export health certificates should be issued for pets travelling to other EU countries.

Non-EU listed countries

To enter a non-EU listed country that does not accept an EU pet passport, pets may need an export health certificate or an import permit. Some of these countries require an animal to have been vaccinated against rabies within a specified period before it arrives so you might need to revaccinate some pets against rabies before the booster is due. Other treatments may also be necessary. Pet owners should be advised to obtain more information from their local Animal Health Divisional Office.

Residence

If a pet stays in another EU or non-EU listed country it may become subject to that country's rules on residence e.g. pets in France become resident after 3 months. Owners should be advised to check with the authorities of the country what those rules are and what implications becoming resident will have for their pet. For example, some countries require resident pets to have an annual rabies vaccination.

Health and welfare

We advise owners to consult their vet about their pet's fitness to travel abroad and to ask about any preventative treatment against the risk of infection (e.g. for heartworm) depending on where it is going.

If a pet becomes ill after returning to GB, please ask the owner where it has been so that you can consider diseases not normally found here. If you suspect or diagnose an exotic disease, please report it through the DACTARI scheme which has been set up to record such diseases (*see part 4*).

Owners are also recommended to consider their pet's welfare needs when travelling abroad and whether it will benefit from travelling with them. A welfare leaflet is available from the PETS website or Helpline.

PART 4. MORE INFORMATION

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

PETS

- Website: www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/index.htm
- Helpline: 0870 241 1710 (Monday to Friday - 08.30 to 17.00 UK time)
- E-mail: pets.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk (enclose your postal address and daytime telephone number)
- Fax: 01245 351162

Quarantine

- Website: www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/rabies/default.htm
- Telephone: 01245 458739
- E-mail: quarantine@defra.gsi.gov.uk
- Fax: 01245 351162

Scottish Executive

- Telephone: 0131 244 6182/1
- E-mail: animal.health@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
- Fax: 0131 244 6616

National Assembly for Wales Department of Environment, Planning and Countryside (NAWDEPC)

- Telephone: 01286 662027 (English and Welsh)
- E-mail: AnimalByProductsCaernarfon@wales.gsi.gov.uk

DACTARI

DACTARI report forms and guidance notes are available from your local Animal Health Divisional Office or the DACTARI website:
www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/veterinary/dactari/index.htm

Annex A

The listed countries

UK-resident pets can travel to any of the countries below and return to the UK under PETS. Pets coming from any of these countries can also enter the UK under PETS. Animals must not have been outside any of these countries in the six months before travelling to the UK. All dogs and cats entering the UK under PETS must do so using an approved transport company and route. Please advise clients to contact Defra, Scottish Executive or NAWDEPC for more information.

These countries are subject to change. For the latest situation see the PETS website or ring the Helpline.

(a) EU countries and territories

Austria	Estonia	Hungary	Netherlands
Azores	Faroe Islands	Ireland ³	Poland
Balearic Islands	Finland	Italy	Portugal
Belgium	France	Latvia	Réunion
Bulgaria	French Guiana	Lithuania	Romania
Canary Islands	Germany	Luxembourg	Slovakia
Ceuta	Gibraltar	Madeira	Slovenia
Cyprus ¹	Greece	Malta	Spain
Czech Republic	Greenland	Martinique	Sweden
Denmark	Guadeloupe ²	Melilla	

¹ Dogs and cats prepared for PETS in, or returning under PETS to the UK from, the Republic of Cyprus may enter or re-enter the UK without quarantine. However, as at October 2005, PETS compliant animals travelling from north Cyprus (the area north of the Buffer Zone) must be licensed into quarantine for 6 months on arrival in the UK. See the website or contact the Helpline to check for any change in this situation.

² Includes St Barthelemy and St Martin (French part of the island)

³ There are no requirements for pets travelling directly between the UK and the Republic of Ireland

P.T.O.

(b) Non-EU listed countries and territories

Andorra	Croatia	Mayotte	San Marino
Antigua & Barbuda	Falkland Islands	Monaco	Singapore
Argentina	Fiji	Montserrat	Switzerland
Aruba	French Polynesia	Netherlands Antilles	Taiwan
Ascension Island	Grenadines	New Caledonia	United Arab Emirates
Australia	Hawaii	New Zealand	USA (mainland)
Bahrain	Hong Kong	Norway	Vanuatu
Barbados	Iceland	Russian Federation	Vatican
Bermuda	Jamaica ¹	St Helena	Wallis & Futuna
Canada	Japan	St Kitts & Nevis	
Cayman Islands	Liechtenstein	St Pierre & Miquelon	
Chile	Mauritius	St Vincent	

¹ Jamaican law as at October 2005 prevents their involvement in PETS. See the website or contact the Helpline to check for any change in this situation.

Pets travelling within the British Isles

Pets in the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man or Republic of Ireland can travel freely between these countries without the need for any documentation. However, owners with PETS documents should be advised to take these with them in case they are asked to show them.

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