

# On the border of change

A Schnauzer dog with grey and tan fur is sitting on a white background. In front of the dog is a small, blue and grey globe on a stand. The globe shows the continents of North and South America. The dog's head is turned slightly to the left, and its eyes are looking towards the camera.

New year means new regulations – as the UK loses its derogation under EU rules. This is what you need to know about pet travel and the implications for your clients

**O**n 31 December 2011 the UK lost its derogations under EU Regulation 998/2003 relating to the non-commercial movement of pet animals between EU member states. This will bring the UK into line with other member states and make it easier to bring pet animals into the UK. Until now the UK, as well as Ireland, Sweden and Malta have been able to apply more stringent controls to protect against the entry of rabies. These countries, plus Finland, have also had a second derogation to apply additional entry conditions to protect against the entry of tick-borne diseases (e.g. Mediterranean spotted fever) and the tapeworm, *Echinococcus multilocularis*.

## New regulations

From 1 January 2012 the rules for bringing pet dogs, cats, and ferrets into the UK changed. All pets entering the UK will still need to be microchipped and vaccinated against rabies. However under the new rules pet dogs, cats and ferrets from other EU Member States, and listed approved countries, will not need a blood test and can enter the UK 21 days after their rabies vaccination (rather than having to wait 6 months and provide proof of a protective titre).

Pets entering the UK from non-approved countries will still require a blood test, which should be taken at least 30 days after vaccination and 3 months before entry into the UK. Providing pets meet these requirements they will no longer be required to undergo quarantine on entry.

	EU and approved third countries	Non-approved countries
Microchip	Yes	Yes
Rabies vaccination	Yes	Yes
Documentation *	Yes	Yes
Blood test	No	Yes. At least 30 days post vaccination
Length of waiting period before entry	21 days after vaccination against rabies	3 months after blood sample date
Tick Treatment	No	No
Tapeworm treatment **	1–5 days before entry	1–5 days before entry

\* EU Pet Passport or official veterinary certificate from third country. \*\* Dogs only

The up-to-date list of non-EU countries and specific requirements relating to these countries can be found at: [www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/pets/countries/noneu-countries/](http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/pets/countries/noneu-countries/).

Pets travelling from the UK to EU countries will also need to be microchipped and vaccinated against rabies at least 21 days before travelling. The number of pets (dogs, cats and ferrets) that can be moved between EU Member States, including into and out of the UK, is limited to five per person. Anyone moving more animals, for example to take part in a show or sporting event will require a specific health certificate issued by the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency [animalhealth.defra.gov.uk/imports-exports/index.htm](http://animalhealth.defra.gov.uk/imports-exports/index.htm). Countries outside the EU will continue to set their own entry requirements. It is important to note that these changes may have an effect on the entry requirements to other countries, for example from 1 January 2012, cats and dogs from the UK, will be required to have a rabies vaccination and rabies blood test prior to entry into Australia [www.daff.gov.au/aqis/cat-dogs](http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/cat-dogs).

### Client information

The regulations are primarily designed to promote free movement throughout the European Union and protect human health, based on a risk assessment for the spread of diseases of zoonotic importance; they are not concerned with the protection of individual animals. BSAVA have prepared a poster to help you inform owners of the health and welfare implications of taking their pets abroad [www.bsava.com/Advice/PetTravel/tabid/172/Default.aspx](http://www.bsava.com/Advice/PetTravel/tabid/172/Default.aspx).

Clients will also need advice on the preventive measures required to protect their animals against a number of parasites and diseases which are not, or only rarely, encountered in the UK. This advice will need to be tailored to the individual animal and particular itinerary.

### Disease risks abroad

***Echinococcus multilocularis*** – is a taeniid tapeworm endemic in much of Europe, from central France eastwards. Foxes are the main definitive hosts and voles and other small rodents act as intermediate hosts. Dogs are easily infected and although the adult parasite produces no clinical signs in dogs it can cause a potentially fatal condition in humans (alveolar echinococcosis). The microscopic eggs are infective immediately. Infection is uncommon but not impossible in cats.

In endemic areas it is recommended that dogs which have access to rodents are wormed monthly with praziquantal. It is also important to advise clients that the eggs can also be found in the dog's coat especially if it becomes contaminated with fox faeces. Dogs are required to be treated *E. multilocularis* before entry into the UK.

### Vector borne diseases

#### Tick borne diseases

Although the requirement to treat pets for ticks before re-entry into the UK has been removed the need to treat them before travelling abroad has not. While both ticks and tick borne diseases such as **Lyme disease** (*Borrelia burgdorferi*) are present in the UK there are also species of tick (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*) and diseases (e.g. **Erlichia canis**, **Babesia canis canis** and **Hepatozoon** spp) which are not. While the majority of ticks are found in pasture and woodland it should be remembered that *R. sanguineus* can be found in domestic environments such as homes and kennels.

Acaricides should be applied before travel, animals should be checked regularly and visible ticks removed. It should be remembered that frequent water exposure may reduce the efficacy of the acaricidal product and products should be reapplied in line with the manufacturer's instructions.



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### ➔ Other vector borne diseases

**Leishmaniasis** is an infectious and potentially fatal disease caused by a protozoan parasite common in Mediterranean coastal areas and transmitted by phlebotomine sand flies. Despite the name, which relates to their brownish colour, the flies are found in woodlands and crevices in old buildings. The sand flies are active from May to October and feed mainly at dusk and dawn. Prevention involves avoiding the sand flies and the use of insect repellents such as those containing synthetic pyrethroids (do not use in cats) although repellents alone cannot be relied upon to prevent disease. A vaccine has recently been launched in Europe but is not yet available in the UK.

**Dirofilaria immitis** (heartworm) is a nematode worm endemic in Mediterranean areas. Dogs are the primary definitive host however the cat is a susceptible if not ideal host. Microfilariae are spread by blood sucking mosquitoes during feeding and the larvae migrate to the pulmonary artery and adjacent areas where they develop into adult worms. Many mosquitoes are capable of transmitting the parasite including species present in the UK. While the synthetic pyrethroids have some repellent effect on mosquitoes these should not be relied upon and preventive treatments such as Milbemycin or Selamectin should be given throughout the mosquito season starting 1 month before exposure.

### Rabies

Rabies in Europe is predominately sylvatic rabies, with wildlife species, especially the Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), accounting for approximately 80% of all rabies cases.

While many Western European Countries have successfully controlled rabies in wildlife through the use of oral vaccination programs it should be remembered that sporadic cases do still occur, usually in illegally imported animals. While travelling pets will be protected by vaccination it is important for clients to realise that humans will not be and to get immediate treatment for any bite wound.

It is also important to stress to clients the importance of not deciding to rescue strays of unknown health status as this risks introducing a number of diseases into the UK.

### Implications for disease risks in UK

It is likely that the changes in the regulations will increase the number of pets travelling between the UK and Europe. This coupled with the loss of pre-entry tick treatment means that we are likely to see more of the "exotic" diseases mentioned above. While the risk of rabies entering the UK is still considered to be very low, and most likely to be brought in by an illegally imported animal, it would be wrong to be complacent and we must remain vigilant. Rabies is a notifiable disease and any suspect case should be reported immediately to your nearest Animal Health Office [animalhealth.defra.gov.uk/about/contact-us/index.htm](http://animalhealth.defra.gov.uk/about/contact-us/index.htm). The suspected animal should be kept isolated and restrained along with any other animals that have had contact with the suspect case. A veterinary officer will normally come to the practice immediately and will manage the investigation. ■

See the How To on p14 of this issue of **companion**.



## STOP PRESS

### Movement of pets between Republic of Ireland and the UK

The following information became available just before going to press with this article...

**U**nder the EU pet movement system, all pet dogs, cats and ferrets moving between EU Member States must meet the same animal health rules. From 1 January 2012 the requirement is that all pets travelling from the Republic of Ireland to the UK should be microchipped, vaccinated against rabies and accompanied by a pet passport.

As both the Republic of Ireland and the UK have had no indigenous rabies for many decades, compliance checks on pets travelling between the two countries will *not* be applied. Pet owners travelling with their pets should therefore not experience any change on the ground from the 1 January.

- [www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/pets](http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/pets)
- [www.agriculture.gov.ie/pets/introduction](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/pets/introduction)

#### FIND OUT MORE

Further information is available on the BSAVA website in the Pet travel section under the Advice link. Other sources of information include:

- Defra travel regulations [www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2011/06/30/pb13582-bringing-pets-into-uk/](http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2011/06/30/pb13582-bringing-pets-into-uk/)
- BVA – Animal Welfare Foundation leaflet on taking your pets abroad [www.bva-awf.org.uk/resources/leaflets/BVA\\_AWF\\_Taking\\_your\\_pets\\_abroad\\_1008.pdf](http://www.bva-awf.org.uk/resources/leaflets/BVA_AWF_Taking_your_pets_abroad_1008.pdf)
- ESCCAP – Parasite maps [www.esccapuk.org.uk/maps/by\\_parasite.html](http://www.esccapuk.org.uk/maps/by_parasite.html)
- Health Protection Agency advice on Rabies [www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/Rabies/](http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/Rabies/)