

Taking Your Dog Abroad

In the last few years it has become much easier to take your dogs abroad, either on holiday or for longer periods and to many countries where hitherto it was at best difficult and to some countries nearly impossible if you ever want to bring them back to the UK. If you want to bring them back into the UK without the dreaded six months quarantine you will find the new regulations more user friendly.

The fundamental requirement is TIME : You must start at least six months before you need to return to UK

A new European Regulation, 998/2003 was created and came into force on July 3rd 2004. This Regulation sets out the **health requirements** for the movement of pet animals travelling between EU Countries and into the EU from other countries. There are two groups of countries. 'Group 1' covers all EU Countries. 'Group 2' covers a number of designated countries outwith the EU where there are additional impediments to the PETS movements. The UK comprises England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. For the purposes of these regulations The Channel Islands, The Isle of Man and The Republic of Ireland are treated as part of the UK

The Regulations, called "Pet Travel Scheme", (PETS) in the UK covers the requirements for the movement of all the following: Pet dogs, cats, ferrets, guinea pigs, hamsters, mice, rats, gerbils, rabbits and birds.

From 3rd July 2004 changes to the existing requirements, require that:

- 1) All dogs and cats must be MICRO CHIPPED and vaccinated against RABIES and blood tested, Animals must be at least 3 months old before vaccination. a blood sample must be taken at least one month after vaccination. There is then a SIX MONTHS wait to enter or re-enter the UK from the date of a satisfactory blood sample.
- 2) TICK and TAPEWORM treatment must be carried out between 24 and 48 hours **before** being checked in to travel into the UK.
- 3) The travel must be via an approved route and recognised Transport Company.
- 4) The tick and tapeworm treatment must be undertaken by an authorised organisation (not by you!) and entered in your dogs "EU Pet Passport"
- 5) Those animals prepared in a NON-EU listed country will require an "OFFICIAL VETERINARY CERTIFICATE".

From 3rd July 2004 animals prepared for PETS in the EU will require an "EU PET PASSPORT" for entry and re-entry into the UK (this replaces the PETS Certificate, the tick and tapeworm treatment certificates and declaration of residence, all of which are included in your dogs "EU Pet Passport").

To enter the UK from a listed country without quarantine, dogs and cats will still have to be micro chipped, vaccinated against rabies and blood tested. The six month wait to enter the UK starts from the date of a satisfactory blood test and will still apply as before, also so will the time scale for tick and tapeworm treatment.

From the foregoing rather clinical information the most salient factor is TIME. If you are taking your pet abroad you will have to start planning more than six months ahead in order to meet all the legal timescales.

Here is an action plan:

STEP 1. MICROCHIP pet of at least 3 months of age, make sure the chip is readable and details of chip number and location are entered in the passport.

STEP 2. VACCINATE against rabies and have blood sample taken after one month, ensure your Vet enters details and date in the passport. N.B. blood samples must go to an EU approved laboratory and satisfactory results entered in passport by a government approved Vet. N.B. passport will not become valid until six months after a satisfactory blood sample was taken.

STEP 3. Have pet treated for ticks and tapeworm 24-48 hours by a registered vet before check- in for travel back to the UK. Travel must be with a recognised carrier. The requirements are less stringent when the pet will not be returning to the UK

Passports are issued free by DEFRA to "Local Veterinary Inspectors, or may be obtained from the following agencies:-

DEFRA www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/index.htm <0870 241 1710>

Scottish Executive Environment & Rural Affairs Department "DEERAD"

e-mail animal.health@scotland.gsi.gov.uk <0131 244 6182>

DEFRA will send out a full pack of "EUROPEAN COMMUNITY INFORMATION" "PET TRAVEL SCHEME (PETS)" on request

This layman's précis of DEFRA's Regulations is intended as a helpful summary of the law for those interested in taking their pets beyond our shores and should not be relied upon as a definitive legal interpretation of the regulations.