

# Strategic Animal Health Policy Programme

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30 June 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

## THE UK PET TRAVEL SCHEME (PETS)

1 I am writing to you regarding the movement of pets (dogs, cats and ferrets) into the UK under the Pet Travel Scheme.

2 The Pet Travel Scheme aims to prevent rabies, certain tick-borne diseases and tapeworm from entering the UK via pet movements. Before pets can enter the UK under the Scheme they must meet certain animal health requirements which are laid down in EU law (EC Regulation 998/2003). All pets entering the UK are checked to make sure that they meet those requirements, and any that fail to comply must be placed in quarantine until they do.

3 I am writing to inform you that from 1 January 2012, the rules for pets entering the UK will change as the UK aligns its Pets Travel Scheme with the EU-wide pet movement system. Annex I summarises the current UK entry rules and how they will change for imports of pets from the EU, listed and unlisted third (i.e. non-EU) countries from 1 January 2012.

4 Currently all pets entering the UK from unlisted third countries (i.e. those countries not listed in Annex II, for example China and Sri Lanka) must enter quarantine for 6 months when they arrive in the UK. From 1 January 2012, pets from those countries will be allowed to enter the UK without quarantine as long as they meet the EU entry requirements. The requirements for pets entering the UK from the EU or other 'listed' third countries (see Annex II) will also change, e.g. the waiting period before entry will be considerably shorter and a post-vaccination blood test will no longer be required.

5 A pet entering quarantine between 3 July and 31 December 2011 under the existing UK quarantine rules may be eligible for release from 1 January 2012 and before its six month quarantine period has elapsed if it meets the EU entry rules. This will require the pet to have been microchipped, then vaccinated against rabies and possibly blood tested depending on which country it arrives from. Further information on how this may work in practice is attached at Annex III. We are currently discussing the requirements for retaining our existing tapeworm treatment controls with the European Commission.

6 Under the changed rules, we will continue to check pets arriving into the UK. If a pet fails to meet the entry requirements the owner is likely to want to place their pet

in quarantine rather than have it re-exported or destroyed. Quarantine provides a highly valuable service in accommodating pets until they fully meet the entry rules. Although the mandatory requirement to quarantine pets from certain countries will cease from 1 January 2012, we believe the private quarantine sector will still retain a vital role in dealing with non-compliant animals entering the UK.

7 We are also aware that for some owners, voluntary quarantine may remain the preferred option for bringing their pets into the UK. We intend to maintain this option from 1 January 2012, where for example, they need to bring their pets into the UK at short notice. However, pet owners who choose to voluntarily place their pets into quarantine from that date will need to ensure their pets are treated in quarantine (microchip, vaccination, and possibly a blood test, depending on where they have come from) in order to meet the EU entry requirements before they can be released. We expect the voluntary placement of pets into quarantine will continue to be an important function for the quarantine sector.

8 We appreciate that these changes may affect your business operations, and we are keen to ensure that the quarantine sector continues to function effectively. We would like to seek your views on how these changes may affect you and how we can work together in order to implement them as smoothly as possible. So that we can give you more information on how the Pet Travel Scheme will change and the likely impact of those changes, I would like to invite you to a meeting with Defra in Room 807 at the above address at 11:30 on Thursday 14 July 2011. Could you please let me know if you or a representative will be able to attend by emailing us at [pet.travel@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pet.travel@defra.gsi.gov.uk) by Friday 8 July. If you are unable to attend, we would of course welcome your views in writing in advance of the meeting.

Yours faithfully

Strategic Animal Health Policy  
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

## Annex I

Entry rules for pets entering the UK from the EU and listed third countries

What has to be done	Now	From 1 January 2012
Microchip	Yes	Yes
Rabies vaccination	Yes	Yes
Blood test	Yes	No
Pre-entry waiting period	Yes	Yes
Length of waiting period	6 months from date sample taken for blood test	21 days after vaccination
Tick treatment	Yes (24-24 hours before embarkation to UK)	No
Tapeworm treatment	Yes (24-48 hours before embarkation to UK)	Under consideration at European level

Entry rules for pets entering the UK from unlisted third countries

What has to be done	Now	From 1 January 2012
Microchip	All pets from unlisted third countries are licensed into quarantine for 6 months (vaccinated on arrival)	Yes
Rabies vaccination		Yes
Blood test		Yes (sample to be taken at least 30 days after vaccination)
Pre-entry waiting period		Yes
Length of waiting period		3 months from date of blood sample
Tick treatment		No
Tapeworm treatment		Under consideration at European level

## Annex II

**Table 1:** EU Member States

Austria	Ireland	Spain
Belgium	Italy	Sweden
Bulgaria	Latvia	United Kingdom
Czech Republic	Lithuania	
Cyprus	Luxembourg	
Denmark	Malta	
Estonia	Netherlands	
Finland	Poland	
France	Portugal	
Germany	Romania	
Greece	Slovakia	
Hungary	Slovenia	

**Table 2:** Listed third countries in Annex II of EC Regulation 998/2003

Antigua & Barbuda	Falkland Islands	Norway
Argentina	Fiji	Russian Federation
Aruba	French Polynesia	San Marino
Ascension Island	Guam	St Helena
Australia	Hawaii	St Kitts & Nevis
Andorra	Hong Kong	St Lucia
Bahrain	Iceland	St Pierre & Miquelon
Barbados	Jamaica	St Vincent & The Grenadines
Belarus	Japan	Saint Maarten
Bermuda	Liechtenstein	Singapore
BES Islands	Malaysia	Switzerland
Bosni-Herzegovina	Mauritius	Taiwan
British Virgin Islands	Mayotte	Trinidad & Tobago
Canada	Mexico	United Arab Emirates
Cayman Islands	Monaco	USA (mainland)
Chile	Montserrat	Vatican
Croatia	New Caledonia	Vanuatu
Curacao	New Zealand	Wallis & Futuna

There are some extra conditions about movement of pets from one or two of these countries. Further information is available on our Pet Travel Scheme website at: [www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/pets/countries/unlisted-countries/](http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/pets/countries/unlisted-countries/)

## Annex III

### Quarantine Entry Requirements

#### Pets from unlisted third countries (e.g. India, China)

1. Under the current UK Pet Travel Scheme, any pet entering the UK from an unlisted third country must be placed in quarantine for 6 months. Such pets must be vaccinated against rabies but no further health treatment is required.
2. From 1 January 2012, every pet entering the UK from an unlisted third country must meet the following EU rules:
  - Microchip;
  - Vaccination for rabies;
  - Blood sample taken at least 30 days after vaccination;
  - Blood test to confirm a successful vaccination (antibody titre must be  $\geq 0.5$  IU/ml);
  - 3-month wait from date of blood sample (although the 3-month waiting period does not apply to any pet re-entering the UK accompanied by an EU pet passport which shows that the pet was vaccinated and blood sampled with a positive result before the pet left the UK or other EU country);
  - Accompanied by an official third country health certificate (or EU pet passport if pet is re-entering the UK) confirming microchip, vaccination and blood test.

If a pet meets those rules before they enter the UK after 1 January 2012, they will not have to go into quarantine on arrival.

3. Quarantine will still be necessary from 1 January 2012 if:
  - a pet fails to meet the EU rules when entering the UK;
  - pet owners who do not have time to meet the pre-entry requirements and need to travel at short notice, decide to voluntarily place their pet in a UK quarantine facility and meet the above EU entry requirements whilst the pet is in quarantine.

#### Pets in quarantine between 3 July and 31 December 2011

4. The change in entry rules could affect pets already in quarantine before 1 January 2012. Any pet that enters quarantine from 3 July 2011 but before 31 December 2011 will be eligible for release from 1 January 2012 and before the six-month quarantine period has elapsed if they can demonstrate they comply with the above EU rules.

5. In order to meet those EU rules, pets entering quarantine from 3 July 2011 will need to be microchipped (if they have not already) and then vaccinated against rabies. They must then obtain a satisfactory blood test result on a blood sample taken at least 30 days after vaccination to confirm the vaccination has worked and wait a further 3 months from the date of the blood sample. All of these steps can be recorded in a pet passport issued by an official veterinarian before the pet is released

6 However, if supporting evidence shows that a pet has already met some or all of these rules before it enters quarantine, they may not have to be repeated when it is in quarantine.

7 The table below gives an indication of when pets entering quarantine between 3 July 2011 and 31 December 2011 may be eligible for release from quarantine if they have complied with the steps in paragraph 5 after they enter quarantine

**Indicative release dates for pets in six months' quarantine from unlisted non-EU countries**

Pet enters quarantine	UK entry rules (up until 31 Dec 2011). Quarantine period	Release date under current UK entry rules	Possible early release date if pet complies with EU rules
3 July 2011	6 months	2 Jan 2012	1 Jan 2012
3 Aug 2011	6 months	2 Feb 2012	1 Jan 2012
3 Sept 2011	6 months	2 Mar 2012	1 Jan 2012
3 Oct 2011	6 months	2 April 2012	2 Feb 2012
3 Nov 2011	6 months	2 May 2012	2 Mar 2012
3 Dec 2011	6 months	2 June 2012	2 April 2012

**Pets from the EU and listed third countries (e.g. USA, Australia)**

8 Under the current UK Pet Travel Scheme, any pet entering the UK from the EU or a listed third country that does not meet the UK's current entry rules (microchip, vaccination, blood test, six month waiting period, tick and tapeworm treatment, passport/health certification) must be isolated in quarantine for 6 months or until they meet those rules (whichever is the lesser period).

9 From 1 January 2012 pets entering the UK from a listed third country or EU member state must meet the following EU rules:

- Microchip;
- Vaccination for rabies;
- EU pet passport or official third country health certificate confirming microchip and vaccination;
- 21-day wait from date of vaccination.

Pets in quarantine between 3 July and 31 December 2011

10 The change in entry rules could affect pets already in quarantine before 1 January 2012. Any pet that enters quarantine from 3 July 2011 but before 31 December 2011 may be eligible for release on 1 January 2012 and before the six-month quarantine period (or lesser period required to meet current UK Pet Travel

Scheme entry rules) has elapsed if they can demonstrate they comply with the EU rules for these countries.

11 To meet the EU requirements from 1 January 2012, pets will need to be microchipped before they are vaccinated in quarantine (if they have not already been) and will need to complete the 21-day waiting period from the date of vaccination.

12 The table below provides an indication of when pets entering quarantine between 3 July 2011 and 31 December 2011 for the currently compulsory six-month period may be eligible for early release from 1 January 2012 if they comply with the new EU rules.

**Indicative release dates for pets in six months' quarantine from EU member states and listed non-EU countries**

Pet enters Quarantine	Length of quarantine if pet fails to meet rules (up until 31 December 2011)	Release date under current UK entry rules	Possible early release date if the pet complies with EU entry rules
3 July 2011	6 months	2 Jan 2012	1 Jan 2012
3 Aug 2011	6 months	2 Feb 2012	1 Jan 2012
3 Sept 2011	6 months	2 Mar 2012	1 Jan 2012
3 Oct 2011	6 months	2 April 2012	1 Jan 2012
3 Nov 2011	6 months	2 May 2012	1 Jan 2012
3 Dec 2011	6 months	2 June 2012	1 Jan 2012
10 Dec 2011	6 months	9 June 2012	1 Jan 2012
25 Dec 2011	6 months	24 June 2012	15 Jan 2012

13 Pets entering quarantine for a shorter period (e.g. they have already completed four months of the compulsory six-month pre-entry waiting period when they arrive in the UK) may be eligible for release at different dates to those listed above. The following table provides an indication of how early release may work in practice for pets entering quarantine for less than six months.

**Indicative release dates for pets in quarantine for less than six months from EU member states and listed non-EU countries**

Pet enters Quarantine	Scenario	Length of quarantine if pet partly meets current rules (up until 31 Dec 2011)	Release date under current entry rules	Possible release date if pet complies with EU entry rules
3 July 2011	Enters 1 month after blood sample date	5 months	2 Dec 2011	=

3 Oct 2011	Enters 3 months after blood sample date	3 months	2 Jan 2012	1 Jan 2012
3 Dec 2011	Enters 4 months after blood sample date	2 months	2 Feb 2012	1 Jan 2012
25 Dec 2011	Enters 1 month after blood sample date	5 months	24 May 2012	1 Jan 2012

### **What should pet owners do?**

14 All dates in the above tables are indicative and may vary depending on when a pet is placed into quarantine and whether any procedures, such as microchipping, vaccination against rabies and if appropriate, a blood test, were carried out before it entered quarantine or after it entered quarantine.

15 The owners of pets entering quarantine between 3 July 2011 and 31 December 2011 will have the choice either to prepare their pets whilst in quarantine to meet EU rules (enabling them to be released early from 1 January 2012) or to leave their pets in quarantine for the six-month compulsory period without any further health measures being taken. In some cases, it may be more cost effective to keep pets in quarantine for the six-month period.

16 For instance, a pet from an unlisted third country entering six months quarantine on 7 July 2011 will only be released six days early if the owner has the pet prepared to EU requirements whilst in quarantine. Keeping the pet in quarantine for six extra days may be cheaper than paying for it to be microchipped, re-vaccinated and blood tested to meet EU rules.

17 Any owner placing their pet into quarantine from 1 January 2012 will not have the choice as to whether or not their pet meets the EU rules before it can be released. Depending on which country it comes from, it will have to meet the necessary EU entry requirements before it can be released.