

30 Jun 11

## **Changes to the UK Pet Travel Rules affecting Biobest Rabies Services**

Defra has announced today (30th June) that the rules for pets (cats, dogs and ferrets) entering the UK under the Pet Travel Scheme will change with effect from **1st January 2012**. These changes are as a result of the harmonisation of EU regulations bringing the scheme in line with the EU-wide pet movement system (EU Regulation 998/2003).

### **Future Requirement for Rabies Serology**

As Biobest Laboratories has been a leading provider of rabies serology in Europe for a number of years there are specific elements within these changes which will affect customer requirement for our services. We are keen to ensure that our customers are clear on the future requirements for pet travel.

Effectively in the majority of cases, when bringing cats and dogs into the UK from the EU and "listed" third countries there will be no longer a regulatory requirement to carry out rabies blood testing to confirm the status of the animal. We would encourage all customers to use the Defra website to clarify their own situation and have listed relevant links at the end of this document.

As an experienced infectious disease testing laboratory providing rabies post-vaccination blood testing for over 12 years, we have expressed our concern over the relaxation of the rules for rabies control for the UK. Whilst accepting the regulatory decisions taken, we are keen to point out that from the results of blood testing, a consistent number of vaccinated pets fail to have evidence of protection as highlighted in the letter from our Veterinary team published in the Veterinary Record in March 2010, and previously published paper in collaboration with the VLA.. We would therefore strongly encourage consideration for continued rabies serology as a check on the effectiveness of vaccination.

### **UK Pet Travel Rule Changes**

Defra has listed the key differences between the current Pet Travel Scheme rules and how they will change from the 1 January 2012 including the following relating to Rabies:

- a) pets travelling from other EU Member States and 'listed' Third countries (countries which the EU considers do not present a higher risk of rabies incursion compared to movements within the EU, for example USA, Australia and Japan) will no longer need to be blood tested after they have been vaccinated against rabies.
- b) pets travelling from other EU Member States and "listed" Third countries will only have to wait 21 days following their rabies vaccination before they can enter the UK, rather than waiting 6 months as they do now.

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Biobest Laboratories Ltd., 6 Charles Darwin House, The Edinburgh Technopole, Milton Bridge, Nr Penicuik, EH26 0PY, UK  
Tel: +44 (0)131 440 2628 Fax: +44 (0)131 440 9587 email: [enquiry@biobest.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@biobest.co.uk) [www.biobest.co.uk](http://www.biobest.co.uk)

- c) pets travelling from 'unlisted' Third countries (countries which have not applied or been accepted for listed status, because of less robust veterinary or administrative systems or higher rabies incidence, for example China, India and South Africa) will no longer be required to undergo six months compulsory quarantine and will be able to enter the UK if they meet certain requirements (they are micro chipped, vaccinated against rabies and have passed a blood test). They will not be allowed to enter the UK for 4 months after the date of the vaccination.
- d) pet owners who need to travel to the UK at short notice will continue to have the option of voluntarily placing their pet in UK quarantine, where it will be required to undergo the necessary health treatments, such as being vaccinated and blood tested if required, before being released.

The summary of changes laid below is taken from the Defra press release.

#### 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 (24-48 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

### **Relevant Defra Links**

Defra News Release:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2011/06/30/new-rules-pet-passports/>

Defra Travelling with Pets Page:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/>

Defra Leaflet "Bringing Pets into the UK after 01 January 2012"

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13582-bringing-pets-into-uk-110629.pdf>

Defra Pet Travel Scheme Page:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/pets/travel/pets/>