

New rules mean it will be easier and cheaper to travel abroad with pets

It will become cheaper and easier to travel abroad with pets when new rules are introduced at the start of next year.

The UK will harmonise its pet movement rules with the rest of the European Union from 1 January 2012, bringing the UK's Pet Travel Scheme into line with the most recent science. Forcing pets to spend six months in quarantine, a practice dating from the 1800s, is no longer necessary.

All pets will still need to be vaccinated against rabies. Pets from the EU and listed non-EU countries such as the USA and Australia will no longer need a blood test and will only have to wait 21 days before they travel. Pets from unlisted non-EU countries such as India, Brazil and South Africa will be able to enter the UK if they meet certain strict criteria to ensure they are protected against rabies, including a blood test and a three-month wait before they enter the UK.

The UK has been discussing with the European Commission the most appropriate form of tapeworm controls for dogs, to ensure the UK continues to be protected from *Echinococcus multilocularis*. The Commission has recently indicated that its proposals, expected shortly, would enable the UK and other tapeworm-free countries to retain tapeworm controls, with a requirement that animals be treated between one and five days before returning to the UK.

Tick treatment for pet animals returning to the UK will no longer be required. All pet owners travelling abroad with their animals should discuss with their vets the use of treatments, including those designed to control ticks as part of good animal health practice.

The UK, along with Ireland, Sweden and Malta, has an exemption from the standard EU pet travel rules. They are all harmonising their entry rules with the rest of the EU at the same time as the UK.

Notes

Entry rules for pets entering the UK from the EU and listed non-EU countries:

What has to be done	Now	From 1 January 2012
Microchip	Yes	Yes
Rabies vaccination	Yes	Yes
Documentation (pet passport or third country certificate)	Yes	Yes
Blood test (dogs and cats)	Yes	No
Pre-entry waiting period	Yes	Yes
Length of waiting period before entry to the UK	6 months from date sample taken for blood test	21 days after vaccination against rabies
Tick treatment	Yes (24-48 hours before embarkation)	No
Tapeworm treatment	Yes (as for ticks)	Under consideration at European level

Entry rules for pets entering the UK from unlisted non-EU 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 and vaccinated against rabies on arrival	Yes
Rabies vaccination		Yes
Blood test		Yes. Blood sample taken at least 30 days after vaccination.
Documentation (third country certificate)		Yes
Pre-entry waiting period		Yes
Length of waiting period before entry to the UK		3 months after blood sample date
Tick treatment		No
Tapeworm treatment		Under consideration at European level

*For the most up-to-date information please refer to Defra's website.