



ASSURING THE SAFETY, QUALITY AND EFFICACY
OF VETERINARY MEDICINES



PRESS RELEASE

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PRACTICE PREMISES REGISTER OPENS FOR REGISTRATIONS

Registrations for the new RCVS Register of Veterinary Practice Premises will be accepted from 1 November 2008, allowing all those who wish to supply medicines from veterinary practice premises from 1 April 2009 onwards a full five months to comply with the latest medicines legislation.

In order to fulfil its obligations under European law to maintain and improve traceability of, and accountability for, veterinary medicines, the UK Government decided that any veterinary surgeon may only supply veterinary medicinal products (VMPs) from premises registered with the Secretary of State, with effect from 1 April 2009.

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) is responsible for the inspection and registration of practices under the Veterinary Medicines Regulations. Steve Dean, VMD's Chief Executive, says the new veterinary practice premises register will complete the UK information base by bringing veterinary practices in line with other suppliers of veterinary medicines who already have to operate from registered premises.

The Register will enable the supply of veterinary medicines by veterinary surgeons, including controlled drugs, to be subjected to inspection and verification. As a result, DEFRA Ministers and the European Commission can be re-assured that veterinary medicines are being supplied in the UK in accordance with EC legislation.

In discussion with the VMD, it was agreed that the most appropriate body to maintain this register would be the RCVS, not least because the College already manages the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme and publishes the (voluntary) *Directory of Veterinary Practices*, so has the necessary systems already in place. The register will be published on RCVSonline and updated quarterly.

Whilst there will now be a statutory fee levied for each practice premises registered on the new Register, the College's existing database framework has kept this to a relatively low £40 compared to what other bodies might have had to charge after starting from scratch.

Practices could appear in the *Directory* for free because the cost of producing it was partially covered by subsequent data sales. However, the new Register will need to be self-funding, as the data it contains will be freely available online.

Not all practices will have to pay the statutory fee, however, as RCVS President Jill Nute explains: "For those practice premises already accredited under the RCVS

Practice Standards Scheme (PSS), the fee will be taken from their existing PSS annual fee," she says.

"What's more, accredited practices will not face additional four-yearly inspections by VMD inspectors (unless there is an investigation for enforcement purposes) as their PSS inspections already ensure that they keep up to date with current medicines legislation."

Practice premises that have applied to join the Scheme, but have not yet been accredited, will not face additional VMD inspections either, but will still need to pay the statutory fee.

To help practices understand the new requirements and what they need to do before next April, the RCVS has produced a range of guidance, including a series of Frequently Asked Questions (www.rcvs.org.uk).

"In particular, we hope this guidance will help to explain which premises are likely to be considered 'veterinary practice premises' and the difference between those premises and places where medicines might simply be stored or kept," says Mrs Nute.

"It is important to realise that there is a legal requirement to register veterinary practice premises for the supply of medicines, and a professional obligation, set out in the *Guide to Professional Conduct*, to keep a record of where all medicines are stored or kept. This record should avoid the need for additional registration of car boots, farms and homes."

Over the coming weeks, application forms will be posted to all practices currently listed in the *Directory* and accredited under the PSS, containing all the practice information currently held. These forms must be checked, signed and returned, even if no fee is due. Separate application forms will be available for any non-accredited practice premises not published in the *Directory*, and a letter will be sent to all RCVS members to ensure the whole profession is aware of the new requirements.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

- 1) The RCVS is the regulatory body for veterinary surgeons in the UK and deals with issues of professional misconduct, maintaining the register of veterinary surgeons eligible to practise in the UK and assuring standards of veterinary education. It also has a 'Royal College' role, which means that it is responsible for post-graduate educational and veterinary nursing qualifications.

- 2) The RCVS Practice Standards Scheme is a voluntary initiative to accredit veterinary practices in the UK. Through setting standards and carrying out regular inspections, the Scheme aims to promote and maintain the highest standards of veterinary care.
- 3) The VMD is the competent authority for veterinary medicines in the UK, and is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. It is responsible for the authorisation and control of the manufacture and marketing of veterinary medicines, for monitoring suspected adverse reactions to veterinary medicines, for statutory surveillance for residues of veterinary medicines in meat and animal products offered for sale, for negotiations on behalf of the UK within the EU, and for the provision and implementation of policy advice on these matters to Ministers.
- 4) RCVS guidance on the new practice premises register is available at: www.rcvs.org.uk/premisesregister