

Vets Express Concerns Over Changes to Travel Rules

Press Release
September 2011

Experts in veterinary parasitology have been voicing their concern over the implications of the imminent changes to the UK's Pet Travel Scheme (PETS), the system that allows certain species, including cats and dogs, to enter the UK without quarantine. Now ESCCAP's (European Scientific Counsel Companion Animal Parasites) UK branch (ESCCAP UK) will hold a seminar in Bristol on 28th October to make vets aware of the issues and provide a platform for discussion.

Under the new regulations, which take effect from Jan 2012, tick control will no longer be mandatory. With up to 15,000 animals travelling under PETS each month, the possibility of exotic species of ticks being introduced, along with their associated tick borne diseases, becomes more likely. Tick borne diseases in dogs which would not normally be expected to be seen in the UK but that are experienced in the rest of Europe include ehrlichiosis which causes fever, anorexia, weight loss, stiffness and prolonged bleeding and babesiosis which causes weakness, fever, anemia and can be fatal.

The European Parliament has yet to rule on mandatory tapeworm control, although this is expected to be retained as part of PETS.

ESCCAP UK are advising all pet owners to ensure they make an informed decision about tick control when the new legislation comes into effect, so that their pet (and the UK pet population generally) will still be protected.

The seminar will talk about changes in the rules with regard to Rabies, the *Echinococcus* tapeworm and ticks and will discuss the preparations that vets may need to make to deal with the consequences. The ESCCAP UK website www.esccapuk.org.uk is a useful resource for vets and pet owners. It includes general pet parasite information, updates on the PETS situation and podcasts. The next podcast will discuss why PETS may protect human health but not necessarily be effective when it comes to protecting pets against parasites and the diseases that they carry.

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