In order to import into the UK an authorised veterinary medicine from a country outside the EU it is necessary to obtain a **Special Treatment Certificate** (STC) from the VMD. The initial application for a particular animal (or group of animals for species kept in herds and flocks) must be made by hard copy and a fee will apply. Details of the fee can be found on www.vmd.gov.uk/Industry/Fees/fees.htm. Where an animal or group of animals requires a further quantity of the product to be imported, in many cases, it will be possible to obtain a repeat STC using the VMD’s on-line application system (www.vmd.gov.uk/sis/default.aspx). On-line applications are free.

**VMD Small Animal Exemption Scheme**

Veterinary medicines marketed under the VMD’s Small Animal Exemption Scheme do not have a Marketing Authorisation as they are **exempt** from this requirement. The scheme covers only products intended for use in cage birds, homing pigeons, aquarium fish, terrarium animals, small rodents, ferrets and pet rabbits. The products under this scheme do not include any to treat a condition that needs veterinary diagnosis. Also excluded are injections, ophthalmics, aural products, antibiotics, psychotropic drugs and products for food producing animals.

Products marketed under this scheme can be identified as the label includes the statement ‘This veterinary medicine is marketed in accordance with the Small Animal Exemption Scheme’. There is not a complete list of products marketed under this scheme. Instead on the VMD website there is a **list of those active substances** which may be included in products under the scheme; the list is categorised by species www.vmd.gov.uk/Industry/SAES/saes.htm.

Veterinary Surgeons may choose to use a product marketed under this scheme rather than a veterinary medicine with a UK Marketing Authorisation if they are satisfied that there is a clinical case for doing this.

**Measures to Improve Availability**

The VMD is continuing to work with the pharmaceutical industry to encourage the authorisation of further veterinary medicines in the UK. You can help influence companies to commit to the development and registration of particular products by telling the pharmaceutical companies about the products you find the need to use regularly through the prescribing cascade.

**Further Information**

The VMD issues a series of Veterinary Medicines Guidance Notes. These guidance notes provide further detail in connection with each of the above topics. They are available on the VMD website. Those relevant to the topics covered above are:

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<th>VMGN No</th>
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<tr>
<td>No 7</td>
<td>Import Certificates Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>No 14</td>
<td>Marketing Authorisation Exemption Scheme for Pet Animal Medicines</td>
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<tr>
<td>No 15</td>
<td>Guidance on the Use of the Cascade</td>
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A publication from the VMD from January 2008 explaining the Cascade and the philosophy behind it can be found at www.vmd.gov.uk/Publications/VMDpublished.htm.

You can also phone the VMD on 01932 336911 for any additional assistance about veterinary medicines.
Veterinary Medicines with a Marketing Authorisation in the UK

Veterinary medicines which have a Marketing Authorisation have been assessed to ensure that they are of the appropriate quality, can be used safely (for the animal, the user, the environment and if appropriate the consumer) and are efficacious when used in accordance with the instructions on the label.

A small number of products have Provisional Marketing Authorisations. These are usually for products needed in disease emergencies where the benefits of having a product outweigh the risks of an incomplete set of supporting data. For example, at the time of initial authorisation the missing data could be because efficacy field trials have not yet been completed. The label will highlight the nature of the missing data.

Each veterinary medicine with a Marketing Authorisation or Provisional Marketing Authorisation, in addition to the label and any leaflet, has a Summary of Product Characteristics (SPC). SPCs include all of the information on the labels/leaflets as well as some additional information, such as summary information on the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of the product. Copies of SPCs for every veterinary medicine authorised in the UK can be found on the VMD website (www.vmd.gov.uk/esp/site/default.aspx).

As new veterinary medicines are authorised these are highlighted in the list of SPCs as “NEW”.

Whilst products may have an authorisation, not all products are marketed. To check to see if a product is marketed either contact your usual wholesaler or contact the company who holds the Marketing Authorisation.

The Prescribing Cascade

Where a suitable veterinary medicine is not authorised and available in the UK to treat a particular species/indication, a Veterinary Surgeon may follow the prescribing cascade. The prescribing cascade increases the range of medicines available to Veterinary Surgeons. It has three levels, and it is necessary to work down this level by level:

| Level 1 | Use of an UK authorised veterinary medicine indicated for the same species but for another condition or indicated for use in another species. |
| Level 2 | Use of an UK authorised human medicine or use of a veterinary medicine authorised somewhere in the EU but not the UK (Special Import Certificate). |
| Level 3 | Specially prepared (extemporaneous preparation) medicine made by a Veterinary Surgeon, Pharmacist or suitably authorised manufacturer (specials manufacturer). Also, this level includes Special Treatment Certificates. |

When treating food producing species with a product which is not indicated for use in the relevant species, or when using a product not authorised in the EU, it is also necessary to ensure that the active substance appears in Annex I, II or III of the Maximum Residue Limit Legislation and it is necessary to apply a standard withdrawal period. In the case of meat this should be at least 28 days, for milk it should be at least 7 days and for eggs it should be at least 7 days.

VMD Import Schemes

In order to import into the UK an EU authorised veterinary medicine it is necessary to obtain a Special Import Certificate (SIC) from the VMD. For many products these can be obtained using the VMD’s on-line application system (www.vmd.gov.uk/sis/default.aspx). On-line applications are free. If you are the first Veterinary Surgeon seeking to import a particular product then this application must be made by hard copy so that checks can be made on the validity of the product and it can be added to VMD’s systems. A fee will apply. Details of the fee can be found on www.vmd.gov.uk/Industry/Fees/fees.htm.

It is currently difficult to establish a complete list of EU authorised veterinary medicines. However, a publicly available European database called EudraPharm has been created and is gradually being populated with this information. The database link is http://eudrapharm.eu/eudrapharm. Until such time as this database is complete other information sources to find out which products are authorised in the EU include:

- Drop down lists of products for each country on the VMD On-line application system for import certificates. This is the list of products previously imported into the UK. It is not a complete list of products.
- Marketing Authorisation holders who can inform you of authorised products they market in other parts of the EU but not the UK.
- Specialist wholesalers who can advise regarding the availability of medicines from outside the UK.

www.vmd.gov.uk