



ASSURING THE SAFETY, QUALITY AND EFFICACY  
OF VETERINARY MEDICINES

## Horse medicines and passport requirements: Important points for vets

- Horses and other equidae are considered **by law** to be food-producing species in the European Union. It must be assumed that **any** equidae could ultimately enter the food chain, even if the current owner does not wish it to do so
- All horses, ponies and donkeys must have a horse passport. This ensures that those animals treated with medicines not authorised for use in food species don't end up as food for human consumption
- You must check the passport before you administer, prescribe or dispense any medicine. If the passport is not available or you are not satisfied that the passport relates to the horse in question, you must treat the horse as if it's intended for human consumption
- All vaccines administered must be recorded in the passport
- If a horse needs emergency treatment and the passport is not available, or you believe that the passport does not relate to the horse you are treating, you **must** treat the horse with medication suitable for food producing animals. You **must** then issue a document which details the medicines given and an instruction to the owner or keeper to keep this with the passport. An example of this document can be obtained from the BEVA website, [www.beva.org.uk](http://www.beva.org.uk)

In the absence of a horse passport, where a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) is required in accordance with BEVA advice you should select one of the many NSAIDs approved for use in food producing horses, if this is not possible then a NSAID approved for use in another food producing species can be used. It is **very important** to avoid the use of phenylbutazone in these circumstances.

### Horse intended for human consumption

- Any product that is authorised for use in food producing horses **and** has a withdrawal period for horses can be used/prescribed; details of authorised products can be found at: [www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/ProductInformationDatabase](http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/ProductInformationDatabase)
- Any product containing an active substance in the EU's Essential Substances list can be used. You must observe the statutory six month withdrawal period and record the use in the animal's passport
- A product authorised for use in a food producing animal other than horses can be used under the cascade and the minimum statutory withdrawal period of 28 days applies
- If it is necessary to prescribe medication not allowed for food producing horses, it is a legal requirement for you to sign that animal's passport to exclude it from the food chain
- The full guidance can be found on the VMD website, VMGN 16, [www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/public/vmr\\_vmgn.aspx](http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/public/vmr_vmgn.aspx)

### Horse declared as not intended for human consumption

- No specific prescribing requirements apply (apart from the prescribing cascade)
- Once a horse has been signed out of the food-chain, this is **irreversible**
- A duplicate passport will automatically classify the horse as not being intended for human consumption

**Veterinary surgeons who fail to meet these requirements are guilty of an offence under the Horse Passport Regulations and may be fined up to £5,000**

For passport guidance refer to: [defra.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:defra.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk), Defra Helpline 08459 33 55 77

For queries regarding the Veterinary Medicines Regulations refer to: [horsemedicines@vmd.defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:horsemedicines@vmd.defra.gsi.gov.uk), Lea Reynolds 01932 338321