ii. a holder of a manufacturing authorisation may import an unauthorised veterinary medicinal product if it is for the purpose of the manufacture of a veterinary medicinal product for which the importer is permitted to manufacture

iii. if the responsible veterinarian holds a current SIC or STC for a product authorised outside the UK, naming them as the importer, they may legally import the product in accordance with the relevant certificate

iv. an authorised wholesale dealer may import an unauthorised veterinary medicinal product in accordance with a current WDIC, in advance of supplying the product to a veterinarian holding a current SIC or STC for that product

v. an authorised wholesale dealer may import an unauthorised veterinary medicinal product for the purposes of re-export

vi. special rules apply to the use of unauthorised veterinary medicinal products in experimental trials. Contact the VMD directly for further information.

Where can I get more information?
The VMD produces a number of Veterinary Medicines Guidance Notes (VMGN's) and other information, which are available on the VMD website www.vmd.defra.gov.uk. There is also a series of information leaflets available, e.g.

- The Work of the VMD
- Availability of Veterinary Medicines
- Is this Medicine Safe for my Pet?
- Adverse Event Reporting
- VMD's Accredited Internet Retailer Scheme

You can also phone the VMD on 01932 336911 for any additional assistance about veterinary medicines. Alternatively email us at: postmaster@vmd.defra.gsi.gov.uk

Information correct as of February 2014
02/14
Veterinary Medicinal Products (VMPs) are defined as any substance or combination of substances presented for treatment or prevention of disease in animals. In addition, substances are considered to be medicinal if they are used in, or administered to, animals with a view to either restoring, correcting or modifying physiological functions by exerting a pharmacological, immunological, or metabolic action, or in making a medical diagnosis. In other words if a product is administered to an animal to treat or to prevent disease or a physiological disorder, or if it is used by a vet as a means of diagnosing a condition, then it will generally be classed as a veterinary medicine.

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) is the authority responsible for regulating and authorising veterinary medicines in the UK in accordance with the Veterinary Medicines Regulations (VMR).

All veterinary medicines administered in the UK must be granted an authorisation by the VMD. The only exceptions are veterinary medicines sold under the Exemption for small pet animals. The process of authorisation ensures the safety, quality and efficacy of all UK veterinary medicines.

Importation, possession or supply, or administration to animals of unauthorised medicines is illegal under the VMR.

In all cases, the labelling of a UK authorised veterinary medicine will be in English. However, it is permitted for companies to use multi-lingual labels as long as one of the languages is English.

A product that is authorised for sale in the UK is one that is labelled for the UK market and bears a marketing authorisation number. A UK marketing authorisation can be identified by the letters Vm or Vh followed by a five-digit code, an oblique and a four-digit code, or by an EU prefixed authorisation number formatted as below:

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e.g. Vm 04321/4001
Vh 05467/4007
EU/1/99/099/001-001
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Only products that display an authorisation number in one of these formats should be used.

However special dispensation to hold, supply and administer unauthorised veterinary medicines may be made by the VMD to vets on a case by case basis through the provisions of the Special Import Certificate (SIC) and Special Treatment Certificate (STC) schemes. SICs and STCs are product specific and usually for a named animal or herd. These certificates can only be applied for and held by the veterinarian responsible for the animal. Products imported under such certificates will be labelled in the language of the original country and will not have a UK marketing authorisation number.

The VMR give powers to authorised inspectors that allow them to seize and destroy any veterinary medicine that does not comply with the regulations. Failure to comply with the VMR is also an offence and prosecutions do occur.

A full list of UK authorised veterinary medicines can be found on the Product Information Database available on our website www.vmd.defra.gov.uk.

The VMR set out the distribution categories for UK veterinary medicinal products to define who may sell certain types of products. These are:

- Prescription Only Medicine – Veterinarian Only (POM-V)
- Prescription Only Medicine – Veterinarian, Pharmacist, SQP (POM-VPS)
- Non-Food Animal – Veterinarian, Pharmacist, SQP (NFA-VPS)
- Authorised Veterinary Medicine – General Sales List (AVM-GSL)

SQP refers to a Suitably Qualified Person who is registered with a body approved under the VMR. Currently the Animal Medicines Training Regulatory Authority (AMTRA) is the only approved body.

Schedule 6 Exemption for small pet animals

The Exemption for small pet animals permits certain veterinary medicines to be marketed without the requirements for a marketing authorisation. This exemption applies to medicines for administration to aquarium animals, homing pigeons, caged birds, ferrets, rabbits, small rodents and terrarium animals. Although these products are exempted from the need to hold a marketing authorisation, they are still legally classified as veterinary medicines and must meet all the requirements of the VMR relating to manufacture and wholesale.

Can I import a veterinary medicine?

Under the VMR, veterinary medicines may only be imported into the UK under the following circumstances:

- If the product has a current UK marketing authorisation and is labelled for the UK market:
  1. the holder of the marketing authorisation may import the product
  2. the holder of a manufacturing authorisation may import a product to which the authorisation refers
  3. an authorised wholesale dealer may import a product if the authorisation covers the product, the importation is in accordance with a WDIC (Wholesale Dealers Import Certificate), and the holder of the marketing authorisation has been informed in writing
  4. a veterinary surgeon may import any UK authorised veterinary medicinal product
  5. a suitably qualified person may import a UK authorised product he/she is permitted to supply
  6. authorised veterinary medicines in the category AVM-GSL (Authorised Veterinary Medicine – General Sales List) may be imported without restriction.

- If the product does not have a current UK marketing authorisation, there are certain circumstances where importation may be allowed:
  1. a holder of a marketing authorisation may import an unauthorised veterinary medicinal product if it is for the purpose of the manufacture of a veterinary medicinal product for which the importer holds the marketing authorisation.