



Representing the Manufacturers of Animal Medicines

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Press Release

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NOAH EMPHASISES NEED FOR PML MEDICINE CATEGORY FOR PETS

There will still be a need for a non-prescription medicine category for pet medicines currently classified P or PML, when new EU animal medicine rules are interpreted into UK law, says the National Office of Animal Health.

NOAH, the trade association representing the UK manufacturers of licensed animal medicines, has summarised to the VMD its views on key issues arising from the UK implementation of directive 2004/28/EC, relevant parts of the Marsh Report and the report of the Competition Commission into the supply of Prescription Only veterinary medicines (POMs), and highlights points in existing UK legislation which it believes should be amended.

“The Veterinary Medicines Directorate has been listening to stakeholders’ views on how they would wish to see the future shape of UK animal medicines legislation,” says Philip Sketchley, NOAH Chief Executive. “We have a number of suggestions which we believe will help ensure medicines can best fulfil their role in the future health and welfare of the nation’s farm animals and pets. We hope that VMD will take these points on board as it develops its concept papers on these key issues and moves towards proposed legislation later this year.”

“The Government’s new Animal Health and Welfare Strategy includes the principle that prevention is better than cure. NOAH believes - and this has been supported by the plan - medicines can help achieve this aim. While the EU directive spells out the fact that all medicines for farm animals should become POM, there is no requirement for this to happen for companion animal medicines.

“For those products which are not suitable for classification as GSL, and yet do not necessarily need a vet’s intervention, we believe that there should continue to be a classification which ensures pet medicines are controlled yet accessible - and, additionally to their supply by veterinarians, can continue to be sold by pharmacists, animal health merchants and pet retailers with suitably qualified personnel. To impose a blanket POM category for current PML and P pet medicines would run counter to the suggestion in the Marsh report which set out to further increase owner choice about where medicines could be obtained.” says Mr Sketchley.

The need for this category is underlined by the new EU rules, where advertising of POM medicines to the general public will be banned. “This reiterates the need for this non-prescription companion animal category,” stresses Mr Sketchley. Advertising helps to educate pet owners about new products and options to prevent and treat disease of which they may not otherwise be aware. “It is a step towards responsible pet ownership,” Mr Sketchley says.

“We look forward to further discussions on all these points with the VMD over the next few months,” Philip Sketchley adds.

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Notes for editors

1. For further information contact Phil Sketchley or Alison Glennon at NOAH on 020 8367 3131, or by email noah@noah.co.uk or look at the NOAH website www.noah.co.uk
2. The National Office of Animal Health was formed on 1 January 1986 to represent the UK companies which research, develop, manufacture and market licensed animal health products. The association has 33 corporate members and 14 associate members. In 2003 NOAH's members accounted for well over 90% of the £398 million UK animal health market