

## ADVICE NOTE 28

### Bees – Prescription of POM-V medicinal products

- 1) In recent years, losses of bee colonies have increased due to infestation of mites, and the viruses associated with these mites. This is as a result of the mites' developing resistance to the treatments available to eradicate them. Consequently, the VMD and beekeeper representatives have agreed that there is an urgent need to make European treatments available in the UK.
- 2) In addition, the VMD will seek to develop an SQP qualification for bee keepers and legislation to enable them to prescribe appropriate medicinal products.
- 3) To assist, the RCVS has confirmed that veterinary surgeons may apply for Special Import Certificates (SICs) or Special Treatment Certificates (STCs) on behalf of beekeepers and prescribe for the bees; and considered the circumstances when bees can be considered under the veterinary surgeon's care.
- 4) Part 2H of the Guide to Professional Conduct states that;

*'3. Under the Veterinary Medicines Regulations, veterinary surgeons may prescribe POM-V veterinary medicinal products only following a clinical assessment of animals under their care.*

...

#### ***Under his care***

*5. The Veterinary Medicines Regulations do not define the phrase 'under his care' and the RCVS has interpreted it as meaning that:*

*a. the veterinary surgeon must have been given the responsibility for the health of the animal or herd by the owner or the owner's agent*

*b. that responsibility must be real and not nominal*

*c. the animal or herd must have been seen immediately before prescription or,*

*d. recently enough or often enough for the veterinary surgeon to have personal knowledge of the condition of the animal or current health status of the herd or flock to make a diagnosis and prescribe.*

*e. the veterinary surgeon must maintain clinical records of that herd/flock/individual*

*What amounts to 'recent enough' must be a matter for the professional judgement of the veterinary surgeon in the individual case.'*

- 5) Ordinarily, it is necessary for the veterinary surgeon to see the animal, herd or flock immediately, or recently enough, prior to prescription of the POM-V medicinal product. However, considering the current circumstances, in particular the urgent need for treatments to be made available for bees and that new legislation is proposed by the VMD to address the issue, the prescribing veterinary surgeon may not need to visit the beehives before prescribing medicines for bees.
- 6) Prescribing veterinary surgeons must take professional responsibility for the prescriptions and, for example, maintain appropriate clinical records and comply with the responsibilities for the supply of medicines, as set out in the Guide at part 2H;

***'Associated responsibilities with the prescription and supply of medicines***

*13. A veterinary surgeon who prescribes a POM-V or POM-VPS veterinary medicinal product, or supplies a NFA-VPS veterinary medicinal product, must:*

- a. before he does so, be satisfied that the person who will use the product is competent to use it safely and intends to use it for a use for which it is authorised;*
- b. when he does so, advise on the safe administration of the veterinary medicinal product;*
- c. when he does so, advise as necessary on any warnings or contra-indications on the label or package leaflet; and*
- d. not prescribe (or in the case of a NFA-VPS product, supply) more than the minimum quantity required for the treatment.*

*14. The Veterinary Medicines Regulations do not define 'minimum amount' and the RCVS considers this must be a matter for the professional judgement of the veterinary surgeon in the individual case.*

*15. Veterinary medicinal products must be supplied in appropriate containers and with appropriate labelling.*

*16. Veterinary surgeons may make retail supplies of POM-V veterinary medicinal products on the prescription of another veterinary surgeon (i.e. for animals that are not under the care of the supplying veterinary surgeon).'*