



VETERINARY IRELAND PRESS RELEASES

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VETERINARY IRELAND SUPPORTS PRACTICAL FARM RULES REGARDING MEDICINES PROPOSED BY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

An EU directive governing the control and distribution of veterinary medicines, will affect Irish farmers by requiring that all medicines for food animals will be supplied under prescription. Soon to be implemented into Irish law, a "professional person qualified to" prescribe must create a written record (a prescription) each time a medicine is prescribed and/or dispensed for any food producing animal.

In a recent submission to the Department of Agriculture and Food, Veterinary Ireland contended that when the veterinary surgeon is making decisions regarding the need for medicines they will undoubtedly use all their skills, including their knowledge of pharmacology (especially considering the importance of prudent use of antibiotics), pathology, parasitology, bacteriology not to mention their clinical skills, observations and hands-on experience of the farm. In this context, it was contended that "it is unreasonable and perhaps imprudent to allow minimally trained personnel to write prescriptions from a distance", according to the organisations President, Peadar O Scanail.

"In this regard, Veterinary Ireland strongly supports the view of the Department of Agriculture and Food that prescriptions can only be issued by a veterinarian, and under specific conditions. These include the fact that a registered veterinarian can only prescribe products for animals under his / her care", he said. In order to facilitate ease of availability of necessary medicines to farmers, while recognising that it is illogical to classify an injectable antibiotic in the same legal supply route as a routine vaccine or anthelmintic, Veterinary Ireland has proposed that two categories of prescription only medicines would be recognised for food producing animals under the revised Animal Remedies Regulations Mr. O Scanail listed these as:

- A) A first schedule of products, which would include antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, hormones, eradication scheme vaccines for all species
- B) A second schedule of products, the prescription for which could be filled by a registered veterinarian, a pharmacist or a licensed merchant. This class would include intramammary antibiotic cerates, endoparasiticides, ectoparasiticides, endectocides, oral fluid replacement therapies, vaccines (except eradication scheme) and mineral / vitamin preparations.

“Certain conditions would apply to the supply of these products, depending on which class of POM they belong to”, he said.



SCHEDULE ONE PRESCRIPTION ONLY MEDICINES

“After a clinical examination of affected animal(s), the vet can prescribe sufficient treatment for the animal(s). If treatment fails or new cases arise within 31 days, the vet can prescribe further or alternative treatment without another clinical examination. If a farmer notices an ill animal or number of animals, and if they are confident that the animal has an easily recognised ailment, the farmer can take note of the identity of the animal(s) and discuss it with their vet. On the basis of the registered veterinary surgeon’s own knowledge of the health status of the animal(s), and information obtained from the owner, the registered veterinary surgeon may prescribe sufficient medication for the treatment of animals specifically identified by tag number(s), without clinical examination. If treatment fails however, it is contended that a clinical examination must be carried out to evaluate efficacy of therapy and/or to suggest an alternative approach. Veterinary Ireland proposes that in any of the above events the registered veterinary surgeon shall not prescribe a quantity that exceeds one month’s supply for the affected animal(s), while other conditions would apply in the case of chronic illness and in intensive livestock.

SCHEDULE TWO PRESCRIPTION ONLY MEDICINES

“Veterinary Ireland proposes that a prescription would be issued which would include a general description of the group to be treated, and would cater for treatment that does not exceed six months supply, for that group. Certain additional conditions have been proposed e.g. in the case of Dry Cow Therapy (DCT) and Lactating cow therapy (LCT), intramammary tubes could only be prescribed where:

- i. An annual Mastitis Therapy consultation by the bona fide veterinarian is a minimum requirement.
- ii. It can be demonstrated that DCT and monitoring of LCT is part of an ongoing mastitis control programme where records are kept

“Veterinary Ireland believes that this approach will provide maximal benefit to animal health and welfare on Irish farms and lead to cost-effective use of medicines. Veterinarians, deciding and advising on medicine usage at farm level, provide a logical critical control point in delaying the onset of resistance to anthelmintics and antimicrobials and enhance the level of safety to the consumer in the modern farm-to-fork approach to food production”, Mr. O Scanail concluded.