

## The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) Ferrets

This fact sheet replaces fact sheet 5 dated June 2004. European Regulation 998/2003 took effect on 3 July 2004. It sets out the rules for pet animals travelling between European Union (EU) countries and into the EU from other countries.

This fact sheet explains how to prepare a ferret so that it can enter the UK without quarantine. It covers ferrets travelling with an EU pet passport.

For details of other contact points see part 6.

### PART 1: THE RULES

To **enter the UK** from a listed country (see Part 3) without quarantine a ferret must, **in this order**, be microchipped, vaccinated against rabies and issued with an EU pet passport and treated against ticks and tapeworms. See part 2 for detailed procedures.

Your ferret must not have been outside any of the countries listed in part 3 in the 6 calendar months immediately before travelling to the UK and must enter the UK using an approved transport company and route (*see part 3c*).

- ***The 6 month rule for entering the UK***

#### Ferrets from EU countries

The 6 month rule does **not** apply to ferrets entering the UK from **an EU country either direct or via other EU countries**. However, it **does** apply to ferrets entering the UK from an EU country via a non-EU listed country.

Where a six month wait applies, your ferret must undertake it only once **provided** the subsequent rabies booster vaccinations are given by the required date.

These rules are to protect human and animal health and to reduce the risk of importing rabies into the UK. Animals not meeting all the rules must be licensed into quarantine.

- ***Where PETS procedures can be carried out***

Your ferret can be fitted with a microchip in any country. Rabies vaccinations, the tick and tapeworm treatment and issuing of documents must be carried out in either the UK or any of the listed countries.

## **PART 2: PREPARING YOUR FERRET**

Use the checklist Annex as you follow the steps.

### **Step 1: The microchip**

Your ferret must first be fitted with a microchip. We recommend that it meets ISO Standard 11784 or ISO Standard 11785. If the microchip does not meet one of these Standards you must provide a reader that can read the microchip number at the time of any inspection.

Ask the person fitting the microchip to check that its number can be read before and after it has been fitted. Get your vet to read the microchip every time you visit.

### **Step 2: The rabies vaccination**

- ***When to vaccinate***

Ferrets being prepared to enter the UK must be at least 3 months old before being vaccinated against rabies. They must be vaccinated *after* a microchip has been fitted. Get the vet to check the microchip number before the vaccination.

If your pet was vaccinated *before* the microchip was fitted, it will have to be vaccinated again. This is to make sure that it is correctly identified when vaccinated.

- ***Vaccination record***

When your ferret is vaccinated, make sure that the vet accurately records the following details on its vaccination record and passport or third country official veterinary certificate:

- its date of birth/age
- the microchip number, date of insertion and its location in the animal
- the date of vaccination
- the vaccine manufacturer, product name and batch number
- the date by which the booster vaccination must be given (i.e. the “Valid until” date)

### **Booster vaccinations**

After your ferret has been vaccinated it will need booster vaccinations. These **must** be given by the “Valid until” date in section IV of the passport or veterinary certificate and be recorded on the vaccination record and in section IV of the passport if you have one.

If the booster date is missed, your pet will have to be vaccinated again. The 6 month rule will apply, if appropriate, from the date of the new vaccination.

### **Step 3: Documentation**

After the vaccination you must get either an EU pet passport. This will show that your pet has been microchipped and vaccinated against rabies. To enter the UK, it must also show a current treatment for ticks and tapeworms at the time of return (*see step 5*).

#### **(a) EU pet passport**

- ***How to get a passport***

In other countries issuing passports, a vet will issue the passport.

When you go to get a passport, take your ferret and its vaccination record which must show your pet's microchip number. Also take evidence of the date it was microchipped. Make sure that the vet correctly completes sections I to IV of the passport.

- ***Using the passport to enter the UK***

To check when your ferret will be able to enter the UK, read the section on the 6 month rule in part 1. If the 6 month rule does not apply, your pet can use the passport to enter the UK after it has been microchipped, vaccinated against rabies and treated for ticks and tapeworms.

You can continue to use the passport to enter the UK **provided** your pet is revaccinated by the "Valid until" date in section IV (*see step 2 if the date is missed*).

- ***Replacing the passport***

When the passport is full, you should apply to a vet (in Great Britain an LVI) for a new one. Take the full passport and your ferret with you.

If you lose the passport, you may obtain a new one by producing your pet's vaccination record which must show your pet's microchip number.

#### **Another document you might need to enter the UK**

- Ferrets which transit an unlisted country when travelling to the UK need a declaration from the transport company to confirm that they remained within the ship or the perimeter of the airport and did not come into contact with other animals during the stopover.

Keep your documents safe because the transport company checking your pet will need to see them.

**You are responsible for ensuring that you have the correct documentation for your ferret to enter the UK. Make sure that it is completed correctly and your pet meets all the rules. If you do not, your pet may not be able to enter the country or may have to be licensed into quarantine on arrival. This will mean delay and cost you money.**

#### **Step 4: Treatment against parasites**

Before your ferret can enter the UK, it must be treated against ticks and tapeworms. Any vet in a listed country can give the treatment. You must not do it yourself. Make sure the vet reads your pet's microchip before treatment.

Your ferret must be treated **between 24 and 48 hours before being checked-in** with an approved transport company to travel into the UK. The treatment must be given every time your pet travels to the UK.

The product used for the tapeworm treatment must contain *praziquantel*.

The product used for the tick treatment must be licensed for that use and have a marketing authorisation in the country of use. Tick collars are not acceptable.

The treatments are to stop the tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis* and certain ticks entering the UK. These parasites can carry diseases which can infect other animals and humans causing illness and sometimes death.

- ***Recording the treatment***

After the treatment, the vet must fill in sections VI and VII of either the EU pet passport.

For both documents, the *date* and *time* of treatment (using the 24 hour clock), the name of the product used and its manufacturer must be shown. The vet must stamp and sign the passport. Make sure all these details are correctly recorded before you leave the vet.

### **PART 3: TRAVELLING TO THE UK**

UK-resident ferrets can travel to any of the EU countries listed below and return to the UK under PETS. They can also, having travelled to any of the non-EU countries listed below, return to the UK under PETS. Ferrets that come from any of these countries can also enter the UK under PETS. Ferrets must not have been outside any of the EU or non-EU listed countries in the 6 calendar months before travelling to the UK.

### (a) EU countries and territories

|                     |                         |                      |          |
|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Austria             | Faroe Islands           | Ireland <sup>3</sup> | Poland   |
| Azores              | Finland                 | Italy                | Portugal |
| Balearic Islands    | France                  | Latvia               | Réunion  |
| Belgium             | French Guiana           | Lithuania            | Slovakia |
| Canary Islands      | Germany                 | Luxembourg           | Slovenia |
| Ceuta               | Gibraltar               | Madeira              | Spain    |
| Cyprus <sup>1</sup> | Greece                  | Malta                | Sweden   |
| Czech Republic      | Greenland               | Martinique           |          |
| Denmark             | Guadeloupe <sup>2</sup> | Melilla              |          |
| Estonia             | Hungary                 | Netherlands          |          |

<sup>1</sup> As at October 2004, ferrets can only be prepared for PETS in, and enter or re-enter the UK without quarantine from, the Republic of Cyprus. All ferrets travelling from Northern (Turkish)

Cyprus will have to be licensed into quarantine for 6 months on arrival in the UK. This must be arranged before the animal travels. See the website or contact the Helpline to check for any change in this situation.

<sup>2</sup> Includes St Barthelemy and St Martin (French part of the island)

<sup>3</sup> There are no requirements for ferrets travelling directly between the UK and the Republic of Ireland

Owners of ferrets entering the Channel Islands or the Republic of Ireland from outside the British Isles should contact the appropriate authorities in those countries for advice on approved routes and any other requirements.

### (b) Non-EU listed countries

|                   |                      |                      |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Andorra           | Croatia              | Mauritius            | St Pierre & Miquelon |
| Antigua & Barbuda | Falkland Islands     | Mayotte              | St Vincent           |
| Aruba             | Fiji                 | Monaco               | San Marino           |
| Ascension Island  | French Polynesia     | Montserrat           | Singapore            |
| Australia         | Grenadines           | Netherlands Antilles | Switzerland          |
| Bahrain           | Hawaii               | New Caledonia        | Taiwan               |
| Barbados          | Hong Kong            | New Zealand          | United Arab Emirates |
| Bermuda           | Iceland              | Norway               | USA (mainland)       |
| Canada            | Jamaica <sup>1</sup> | Russian Federation   | Vanuatu              |
| Cayman Islands    | Japan                | St Helena            | Vatican              |
| Chile             | Liechtenstein        | St Kitts & Nevis     | Wallis & Futuna      |

<sup>1</sup> Jamaican law as at October 2004 prevents their involvement in PETS. See the website or contact the Helpline to check for any change in this situation.

The maximum number of all types of pet animals each person may bring into the EU from most non-EU listed countries is 5. This rule does not apply to animals brought from Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland or the Vatican. For details of transporting more than 5 animals into the EU from countries except those named in the previous sentence contact Defra's International Animal Health Division on 020 7904 6415 (e-mail: [iah-imports@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:iah-imports@defra.gsi.gov.uk)).

### **(c) How to travel**

If you bring your ferret into the UK under the Scheme direct from a listed country you must use one of the routes and transport companies on the DEFRA route lists: [http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/pets/procedures/support-info/routes\\_europe.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/pets/procedures/support-info/routes_europe.htm)

Alternatively, you may travel to another EU or non-EU listed country and then enter the UK on an authorised route. In this case, the tick and tapeworm treatment must be given before you check in for the final stage of your journey. See part 2, step 3 if your pet transits an unlisted country on its journey to the UK.

All companies on the lists have been given approval to carry ferrets but not all may wish to. **Check with the company before booking that they are willing to transport your ferret:**

(<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/PETS/Procedures/Support-info/routes.htm>)

Routes may change and new ones may be added. For the latest information, see the PETS website or ring the PETS Helpline. Some routes are seasonal or irregular so check availability with the transport company.

Check your pet's travel arrangements with the company as they may have their own conditions of travel. Check the costs, requirements and procedures before booking your journey to the UK.

If travelling by air, you may need to arrange with the transport company for the passport or official certificate to accompany your ferret. (You may wish to keep a copy for reference).

If your pet enters the UK with an unapproved transport company or on an unauthorised route, you will need to arrange for it to be licensed into quarantine on arrival with a view to obtaining its early release. If it can be shown that your pet meets all the necessary requirements of the Scheme it can be released within a few working days. See **(d)** below for more information.

### **(d) Early release from quarantine**

Any ferret entering the UK which does not meet all the Scheme rules must be licensed into quarantine. It may be released from the date it can be shown to comply with the rules. To license your pet into quarantine, you must get an import licence from Defra (for England), SEERAD (for Scotland) or DARD (for Northern Ireland) before it travels to the UK. Part 6 gives contact details. The licence must accompany your ferret when it travels. You must meet the costs of quarantine.

### **(e) Travel charges**

Transport companies will usually include travel, checking and handling charges in the ticket price for your pet. Check when you make your booking. No charges are made by Defra or the Devolved Authorities.

## **(f) Customs formalities**

When bringing a ferret into the UK from **outside the EU** you must complete Customs formalities.

## **PART 4: THE PETS CHECK**

**Remember to check that the approved transport company you wish to travel with will accept your ferret before you book your trip.**

Before you board a Eurotunnel train or ferry in an EU country travelling to the UK on an authorised route, you must present your ferret to transport staff who will check its microchip and official documentation.

After a satisfactory check, you will be given a badge or sticker which should be displayed as instructed by the transport company staff. This should not be removed until you have left the port of arrival in the UK.

*If your ferret fails the check, it will not be allowed to travel until the problem has been resolved unless you arrange for it to enter quarantine in the UK.*

Ferrets travelling to the UK by air will have their microchip and official documentation checked on arrival by staff at the Animal Reception Centre.

Your ferret may be subject to a further official check by Defra or SEERAD after it has been checked by the transport company. This is for quality assurance purposes.

*If your ferret fails the check, it will either have to go into quarantine or be re-exported. If a pet arriving by air has failed only because it has not met the rules on tick and tapeworm treatment, it must be treated on arrival and then held for 24 hours after treatment. If the animal arrives at Heathrow, this can be done there. In all other cases it must be done at local quarantine premises. If it is treated in quarantine, you will have to seek approval for its early release (part 3d).*

## **Health and welfare of your ferret**

Please consider the welfare needs of your ferret when travelling abroad, and whether it will benefit from travelling with you.

## **PART 5: CONTACTS**

### Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

#### PETS

- Website: [www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/index.htm)
- Helpline: 0870 241 1710 (Monday to Friday - 08.30 to 17.00 UK time)
- E-mail: [pets.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pets.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk) (enclose your postal address and daytime telephone number)
- Fax: 020 7904 6206

#### Quarantine

- Website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/quarantine/quarantine/qindex.htm>
- Telephone: 020 7904 6222
- Fax: 020 7904 6834

### Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD)

- Telephone: 0131 244 6182/1
- E-mail: [animal.health@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:animal.health@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)
- Fax: 0131 244 6616

### National Assembly for Wales Department of Environment, Planning and Countryside (NAWDEPC)

- Telephone: 01286 662070 (English and Welsh)
- E-mail: [AnimalByProductsCaernarfon@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:AnimalByProductsCaernarfon@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

### Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Northern Ireland (DARD)

- Telephone: 02890 524622

While this fact sheet provides information about the Scheme, it cannot cover every possible situation. Check with one of the contact points above if your questions are not answered by our fact sheets.

## Annex

### PETS CHECKLIST FOR ENTERING THE UK

Tick the boxes as you complete the steps.

#### Preparing your pet

##### Step 1

My ferret has been microchipped

I have a microchip reader (only if the microchip is not ISO Standard)

The microchip can be read

##### Step 2

My ferret was at least 3 months old when vaccinated against rabies

It was vaccinated after being fitted with a microchip

The microchip number has been entered correctly by the vet on the vaccination record

##### Step 3

A vet has correctly filled in all the details in sections I - IV of the EU pet passport.

The passport will be valid for entry to the UK on the date of arrival

##### Step 4

A vet has treated my ferret for ticks and tapeworms 24 – 48 hours before it will be checked-in with an approved transport company for its journey into the UK

The vet has correctly filled in sections VI and VII of the passport or veterinary certificate

## Travelling to the UK

I have arranged for my ferret to enter the UK using an approved transport company and route

If my ferret transits an unlisted country when travelling to the UK, I have obtained the required declaration from the transport company (*step 3*)

If my ferret is entering quarantine, I have obtained an import licence from Defra, SEERAD or DARD before travelling.