



PET TRAVEL & BREXIT

It is hoped that the Brexit negotiations will lead to a similar agreement to that currently in use, but this knowledge may not be available to vets and their clients, via APHA, until nearer to the end of November (if then!). We have been advised therefore to alert Pet Passport holders and those wishing to travel abroad with their pet's to this "Worst Case Scenario" to enable them to ensure that they can travel, whatever sort of Brexit comes about, or if they wish to "wait and see", accepting that they may have to leave the pet behind, if there is insufficient time to jump through all the hoops.

We shall be writing to clients (if GDPR preferences allow this) to inform them of these changes, but have prepared this Q & A sheet which may help answer any queries.

In the event of a "no deal Brexit"

Will I be allowed to travel?

There seems to be no doubt about that – your passport will still be valid and no Country has any plans to ban UK citizens from entering on the 29th March. However, you may require a visa, so this may be worth checking.

Will my pet be allowed to visit EU countries?

Yes, the government states that there will be no ban on travelling. However, you may need to take extra steps to ensure they will be permitted entry if the UK is no longer part of the EU-wide Pet Travel Scheme.

What will the rules be?

The UK will be treated by EU countries as an "unlisted country", and so pets will have to abide by stricter rules than they do at the moment.

What will I have to do?

As now, your dog, cat or ferret will need to be microchipped and vaccinated against rabies. However, (unlike now) they will need a blood test to prove that they are immune to rabies. Actually this is a really good thing – some studies suggest that as many as 10% of vaccinated dogs aren't actually protected against rabies after a single dose of the vaccine. This blood test will have to take place **no less than 30** days after the vaccination. If your dog was vaccinated some time ago, they may need a booster dose.

The blood test will be sent to an official lab that will certify whether they have enough rabies antibodies to protect them (more than 0.5IU/ml). If they do meet this safe level, this will be recorded in your pet's passport. That said, your pet still cannot travel for **at least 3 months** after the successful blood test.

Before travelling, your pet must be certified as healthy and fit enough to travel by an OV (a vet who is licensed to do so by the Government). At the practice, we have three OV vets; Jane, Richard and Matt. This health check has to happen **no more than 10 days** before travelling and you will be issued with a health certificate.

What about coming back into the UK?

At the moment, it does not look like this is going to change at all.

Will my pet need a new booster and blood test before travelling each time?

No – once they have had a successful blood test, as long as their rabies cover doesn't expire (in other words, that they get their boosters within the interval set by the EU and the manufacturers), then they don't need additional vaccines or further blood tests. The blood test will prove that your pet has responded to the vaccine, and if they've responded once, the assumption is that they will continue to do so.

So why is this urgent?

Because getting certified for travel under the **new** rules will take **at least three** and possibly **four or more** months.

So if you want to travel on 29th March, you will need to:

- Get vaccinated or boosted (if needed) by 28th November
- Get a successful rabies blood test by 27th December
- Get a health certificate between 19th and 28th March

Is it certain this is going to be needed?

No it isn't. The government is hoping to get a deal. However, it is useful to be prepared in case the Brexit negotiations break down.

Need more advice?

Please see the APHA Guidance at www.gov.uk/guidance/pet-travel-to-europe-after-brexit and we will publish further updates as soon as these are known.