

The Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) Ferrets

This fact sheet replaces fact sheet 5 dated March 2005. 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 in the UK or in one of the countries listed in part 3 so that it can enter or re-enter the UK without quarantine. It also gives some information about preparing your ferret to travel to other listed countries. It covers ferrets travelling with an EU pet passport or a third country official veterinary certificate. Annex A explains the rules for ferrets from a country not listed in part 3.

For details of other fact sheets in this series and contact points see part 6.

PART 1: THE RULES

To **enter or re-enter the UK** from a listed country without quarantine a ferret must, in this order, be microchipped, vaccinated against rabies and issued with an EU pet passport or a third country official veterinary certificate and treated against ticks and tapeworms. See part 2 for detailed procedures. Ferrets may not enter the UK with PETS certificates.

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*).

For advice on taking your ferret **from the UK to other EU countries** see part 5b.

There are no requirements for ferrets travelling directly between the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

- ***The 6 month or 21 day rule for entering the UK***

- (a) Ferrets from non-EU listed countries

- Your ferret may not enter or re-enter the UK under PETS from a non-EU listed country until 6 calendar months have passed from the date that a vet vaccinated it against rabies. The date of the vaccination is shown in section IV of the passport or certificate which the vet must complete (*see part 2, step 3*).

Ferrets from non-EU listed countries which travel to the UK via an EU country are also subject to the 6 month rule.

(b) Ferrets from EU countries

Your ferret may not enter the UK under PETS from an EU country until 21 days have passed from the date of its first rabies vaccination. However, if the vaccine manufacturer's datasheet requires more than one vaccination to complete the primary vaccination protocol, the 21 day wait applies from the date of the final vaccination of that protocol. Your vet will advise you further.

The 6 month rule applies to ferrets entering the UK from an EU country via a non-EU listed country.

Your ferret must undertake the 6 month or 21 day wait 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 at Annex B 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 Annex A to 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 or re-enter the UK must be vaccinated in accordance with the recommendation of the vaccine manufacturer's data sheet. They must be vaccinated *after* a microchip has been fitted. Get the vet to read 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). This date is calculated by reference to the validity period of the vaccine given in the vaccine manufacturer’s data sheet.

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 or 21 day rule for entering the UK will apply, as appropriate, from the date of the new vaccination. See also part 5 for the 21 day rule for travelling from the UK to other EU countries.

Step 3: Documentation

After the vaccination you must get either an EU pet passport (for ferrets in EU and certain non-EU listed countries) or a third country official veterinary certificate (for ferrets in non-EU listed countries not issuing passports). This must show that your pet has been microchipped and has a current rabies vaccination. It must also show a current treatment for ticks and tapeworms at the time of entry to the UK (*see step 5*).

(a) EU pet passport

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

In Great Britain, the passport is completed and issued by a government-authorized vet known as a Local Veterinary Inspector (LVI). If your veterinary practice does not have a resident LVI, your vet may be able to tell you where the nearest one works. Your local Animal Health Divisional Office can also provide these details. Defra does not charge vets for the 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 check when your ferret will be able to leave, enter or re-enter the UK, read the section on the 6 month or 21 day rule in part 1 and the 21 day rule in part 3. 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*). To enter the UK, the passport must also show a current treatment for ticks and tapeworms at the time of return (*see step 5*). For travelling from the UK to other EU countries, see part 5(b).

- ***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.

(b) Third country official veterinary certificate

This certificate can be issued by any vet in a non-EU listed country. It is headed “*Veterinary certificate for domestic dogs, cats and ferrets entering the European Community for non-commercial movements (Regulation (EC) No 998/2003*”. The certificate must be a single sheet in English and may also contain a translation in another language. It must be completed in block letters in the language of the EU country of entry or in English.

When you go to get the certificate, 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 completes sections I to IV of the certificate correctly and enters his/her own details in section V. If the vet is not a government-approved vet, the certificate must also be dated and stamped by a vet authorised by the competent authority.

- ***Validity of the certificate***

You need to be aware of the following. **The certificate will not become valid for entry to the UK for 6 calendar months from the vaccination date shown in section IV. However, it is only valid for entry to the EU and subsequent travel within the EU for 4 months** from the date it was signed or endorsed, or until the “Valid until” date shown in Part IV, whichever is earlier. You should therefore delay getting the certificate until a month or two before you travel to ensure that it will still be valid when you enter the UK. To enter the UK, the certificate must also show a current treatment for ticks and tapeworms at the time of return (*see step 5*).

In addition to this certificate, when you travel you must have with you your ferret's original vaccination record (or a certified copy) which shows the microchip number.

- ***Changing the certificate for a pet passport***

If the certificate expires while you are in the EU, you will need to ask a vet to issue a European pet passport (*see above*). In addition to the certificate, you must provide the vet with your pet's original vaccination record (or a certified copy) which shows the microchip number. Make sure your pet is revaccinated against rabies by the "Valid until" date in section IV of the certificate (*see step 2 if the date is missed*).

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 **not less than 24 hours and not more than 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.

If you are taking your ferret abroad from the UK on a day trip, it will need to be treated in the UK not less than 24 hours and not more than 48 hours before it is checked in for the **return** journey.

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 or the third country official veterinary certificate.

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 or sign, date and stamp the certificate. 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.

Listed countries are subject to change. For the latest situation see the PETS website or ring the Helpline.

(a) EU countries and territories

Austria	Faroe Islands	Ireland ³	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 ¹	Greece	Malta	Sweden
Czech Republic	Greenland	Martinique	
Denmark	Guadeloupe ²	Melilla	
Estonia	Hungary	Netherlands	

¹ Ferrets prepared for PETS in, or returning under PETS to the UK from, the Republic of Cyprus may enter or re-enter the UK without quarantine. However, as at October 2005, PETS compliant animals travelling from north Cyprus (the area north of the Buffer Zone) must be licensed into quarantine for 6 months on arrival in the UK. See the website or contact the Helpline to check for any change in this situation.

² Includes St Barthelemy and St Martin (French part of the island)

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

Ferrets normally resident in the Channel Islands, Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland can enter the UK from listed countries if they meet the rules.

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 and territories

Andorra	Canada	Jamaica ¹	Romania	USA (mainland)
Antigua & Barbuda	Cayman Islands	Japan	Russian Federation	Vanuatu
Argentina	Chile	Liechtenstein	St Helena	Vatican
Aruba	Croatia	Mauritius	St Kitts & Nevis	Wallis & Futuna
Ascension Island	Falkland Islands	Mayotte	St Pierre & Miquelon	United Arab Emirates
Australia	Fiji	Mexico	St Vincent	
Bahrain	French Polynesia	Monaco	San Marino	
Barbados	Grenadines	Montserrat	Singapore	
Belarus	Gwam	Netherlands Antilles	Switzerland	
Bermuda	Hawaii	New Caledonia	Taiwan	
British Virgin Islands				

¹ Jamaican law as at October 2005 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).

(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 enclosed route lists.

Alternatively, you may travel to another EU or non-EU listed country and then enter the UK on an authorised route. In this case, unless your pet does not leave the confines of the airport during the interchange, 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.**

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 which could include a health declaration. 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. An agent, travel company or airline should be able to do this for you and may charge for this service. Alternatively, you might be able to make your own arrangements. This would involve contacting the Customs authorities at your arrival point in the UK to obtain details of the necessary procedures and the appropriate Customs form. You are advised to discuss these charges with your agent etc before you travel as they might be included as part of a package. These charges are not made by the UK Government.

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.

Ferrets travelling on an authorised sea route from a non-EU listed country will be given the same check on arrival.

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).

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.

PART 5: FERRETS IN THE UK AND ABROAD

(a) Ferrets travelling within the British Isles

Ferrets resident in the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland, or which have entered the British Isles under PETS, can travel freely between these countries without the need for any papers. However, if you have PETS documents you are advised to take them with you. Ferrets can be carried on any route within the British Isles subject to the transport company's agreement and conditions of carriage.

(b) Taking your ferret from the UK into other listed countries

EU countries

To travel from the UK to another EU country, a ferret must be microchipped (although some countries accept a tattoo), vaccinated against rabies and issued with an EU pet passport. Malta has additional entry requirements and to enter Sweden your pet must be treated for tapeworms with a product containing praziquantel no more than 10 days before entry. Please contact your local Animal Health Divisional Office or the authorities (e.g. the Embassy) of the country you wish to enter to check the requirements.

- **21 day wait**

For EU countries where more stringent entry requirements do not apply, the EU has introduced a wait of 21 days from the date of the first rabies

vaccination before a ferret can enter those EU countries. However, if the vaccine manufacturer's datasheet requires more than one vaccination to complete the primary vaccination protocol, the 21 day wait applies from the date of the final vaccination of that protocol. Your vet will advise you further.

Booster vaccinations are valid for entry from the date given **provided** they are given on time.

Non-EU listed countries

Before travelling with your pet to any of these countries, you are advised to find out whether they have any import or export requirements for ferrets. For entry, they may require an export health certificate and/or an import licence. Other documents or treatments may also be required. Some of these countries accept an EU pet passport for entry.

Some countries may require your ferret to have been vaccinated against rabies within a specified period before its arrival. You may therefore have to get it vaccinated again before the booster is due.

Advice on export requirements is available from your local Animal Health Divisional Office or contact the authorities (e.g. the Embassy) of the appropriate country.

Residence

If your ferret stays in another country it may become subject to that country's rules on residence. You are advised to check with the authorities of the country what those rules are and what implications becoming resident will have for your pet. For example, some countries require certain resident pets to have an annual rabies vaccination.

(c) Health and welfare of your ferret

When abroad your ferret may come into contact with animal diseases which we do not have in the UK, e.g. diseases transmitted by ticks, and parasites like heartworm. These could kill your animal or make it seriously ill. Some can affect humans.

Before you take your ferret abroad, consult your vet about any preventative treatment necessary and how to look for signs of ill health in your pet.

If your pet becomes ill after returning to the UK, explain where it has been so your vet can consider diseases not normally found in the UK.

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

PART 6: MORE INFORMATION

Other fact sheets

- *Fact sheet 1* gives a general introduction to the European Regulation on the movement of pet animals.

- *Fact sheet 2* explains the special arrangements that have been made for dogs and cats to travel within or into the EU with a valid PETS certificate.
- *Fact sheet 3* explains the rules for dogs and cats travelling between EU countries with an EU pet passport.
- *Fact sheet 4* explains the rules for dogs and cats entering the UK from non-EU listed countries with an EU pet passport or an official veterinary certificate.
- *Fact sheet 6* explains the rules for the movement of pet rabbits and rodents into the UK.

Contacts

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

PETS

- Website: 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 (enclose your postal address and daytime telephone number)
- Fax: 01245 351162

Quarantine

- Website: www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/rabies/default.htm
- Telephone: 01245 458739
- E-mail: quarantine@defra.gsi.gov.uk
- Fax: 01245 351162

Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD)

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

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

- Telephone: 01286 662027 (English and Welsh)

- E-mail: 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, and to make sure you have the latest information.

Annex A

FERRETS FROM UNLISTED COUNTRIES

Ferrets resident in an unlisted country entering the UK direct or via any non-EU country

A ferret entering the UK from any non-EU country, whether directly or via any non-EU country, will have to be licensed into quarantine for 6 months on arrival (*see part 3d although early release will not apply*).

Ferrets resident in an unlisted country entering the UK via another EU country

Alternatively, to enter the UK from an unlisted country without quarantine a ferret can be fully prepared for PETS after entry into an EU country (other than the UK, Ireland, Sweden or Malta) by following the procedures set out in part 2. In this case, a ferret already fitted with a microchip is not required to be re-microchipped. The 6 month rule will also apply and your pet must be given tick and tapeworm treatment and enter the UK with an approved transport company on an authorised route.

Before entering an EU country (other than the UK, Ireland, Sweden or Malta) from an unlisted country, your pet must:

- be identified by a microchip (or a tattoo may be accepted by certain countries)
- be vaccinated against rabies
- have a blood sample taken by an authorised veterinarian at least 30 days after vaccination and 3 months before travelling to an EU country
- have a blood test result from an EU-approved laboratory showing that the rabies antibody titre was equal to or more than 0.5IU/ml
- be accompanied by a certificate issued by an official veterinarian certifying compliance with the above requirements

Ferrets re-entering the EU (other than the UK, Ireland, Sweden or Malta) from an unlisted country with an EU pet passport

Ferrets re-entering the EU (other than the UK, Ireland, Sweden or Malta) from an unlisted country with an EU passport certifying that the procedures in the previous paragraph have been carried out do not need to undertake the 3 month wait referred to in bullet 3. A satisfactory blood test must have been carried out at an EU-approved laboratory before the animal left the EU. Before being able to enter the UK, the pet must wait 6 calendar months in an EU country (other than Ireland, Sweden or Malta). Re-preparation is not required. Your pet must then be given tick and tapeworm treatment and enter the UK with an approved transport company on an authorised route.

If any of the conditions are not complied when your ferret enters the UK it must be licensed into quarantine. It may be released from the date it can be shown to comply with the rules.

Annex B

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 vaccinated in accordance with the recommendation of the manufacturer's data sheet.

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 or the official veterinary certificate. The certificate has been signed by a vet at section V, and endorsed by the competent authority if necessary.

P.T.O.

The passport/certificate 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 travelling with an official certificate, I also have with me my ferret's vaccination record showing the microchip number (*step 3*)

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 (*part 3d*).

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