

*what you should know about . . .*

# SELLING VETERINARY MEDICINES





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RIVERCLYDE

BOOKS

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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**The Veterinary Pharmacy Association** is a non-profit making organisation established in 2014 for the following objectives:

- To promote Veterinary Pharmacy as a discipline to the Veterinary Industry, fellow health care providers, schools of pharmacy and the public in the UK and Ireland.
- To support the professional and commercial activities of Veterinary Pharmacists and Animal Health Advisors/Suitably Qualified Persons by responding to Consultative documents and liaising with the various Bodies and Government Agencies associated with the veterinary sector.
- To facilitate ongoing educational support and CPD for members by providing seminars, courses, online materials and conferences in association with Harper Adams University and the Veterinary Pharmacy Education Programme (VPEP).
- To provide a forum for discussion and social activities.

Details about the activities of the VPA and how to apply for membership may be found at [www.vetpharm.info](http://www.vetpharm.info)

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## SMALL MAMMALS

Stephen Baugh

In this chapter issues associated with small mammals are considered and ways of minimising the risk of disease suggested, so that clients may be advised accordingly.

***After reading this chapter you should:***

- **Be able to identify the main features of the small mammals commonly kept as pets in the UK.**
- **Understand how small mammals should be housed and fed and recognise common conditions.**

### INTRODUCTION

Small mammals are becoming increasingly popular as pets. However, many of these species require very specific management of their husbandry and nutrition to ensure that they remain healthy. Incorrect management and feeding can lead to a variety of diseases many of which are potentially life-threatening.

Treatment of disease in small mammal species can be difficult for several reasons. Firstly, the small size of these animals often leads to limitations in diagnostic and treatment choices. For example, it is very difficult to introduce a catheter into a vein in a rodent that weighs a few grams and so intravenous rehydration is very difficult. Secondly, many veterinary drugs are not licensed for small mammal species. It is unlikely that a veterinary pharmaceutical company would

put a drug through the very expensive licensing procedure to be used in a species likely to be treated only occasionally or if the numbers of owned animals of that species was very small. At the time of writing the NOAH Compendium lists 23 veterinary medicinal products (VMP) licensed for small mammals and 36 for rabbits compared with 361 licensed VMPs for dogs.

For the reasons discussed above it will be clear that prevention is better than cure when dealing with the health of small mammals kept as pets. Nutrition, housing and preventative medicine are the key ways in which we can keep our small mammal pets healthy.

## RABBITS

Rabbits are now the third most popular pet in the UK. There are a wide range of breeds of rabbit that are commonly kept as pets ranging from Dwarf breeds to Giants, lop-eared and lion haired types, an example of which is shown in Figure 5.1.



**Figure 5.1** *Lion-haired rabbit*

## Housing and social grouping

Rabbits are traditionally kept in hutches but it is becoming much more common to see “house rabbits” that are house trained to use a litter tray and live in the home alongside cats and dogs. These animals have the benefit of increased social contact and opportunity for exercise. The close contact with house rabbits means that owners often identify signs of ill health before they would in a hutched rabbit and consequently treatment can be instigated earlier.

Many commercial rabbit hutches are too small to provide adequate exercise for rabbits and so care should be taken when selecting a hutch. Access to an outside run is important to provide exercise and environmental enrichment (see Figure 5.2). Positioning of the accommodation should ensure protection from the elements including draughts, excessive heat and cold.

Rabbits are social animals and should be kept together. Housing with Guinea pigs is common but is not recommended due to aggression, spread of disease and the different dietary requirements of the two species. It is often difficult to introduce adult animals and fighting can occur



**Figure 5.2** *Outside run for rabbits*

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## EQUINE HEALTH CARE

Alison Pyatt

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This chapter deals with challenges that may be encountered with the keeping and management of horses. In it we consider the main causes of poor health and how measures of good husbandry, management and feeding can actively promote well-being in the horse.

***Having completed this chapter you should be able to:***

- **Recognise signs of good and ill health in the horse.**
- **Understand the causes of common health problems of horses and explain preventative and treatment options.**
- **Identify the problems associated with ectoparasitic and endoparasitic infestation and understand measure of both prophylactic care and strategic treatment.**
- **Recognise how good management and husbandry contribute towards health in the domesticated horse.**

### OVERVIEW OF THE UK HORSE INDUSTRY

Horses have long been a favoured pastime in the UK and the horse industry is steeped in history and tradition. The recent success of the equestrian athletes at the London Olympics 2012 in the disciplines of dressage, eventing and show jumping has further increased the interest in horses and

riding. The most recent UK horse industry surveys estimate that there are 3.5 million riders in the UK and that horseracing is Britain's second most popular spectator sport, making it more popular than rugby or cricket (BETA 2011).

People keeping horses in Britain broadly fall into 3 sectors or categories:

- Those who keep horses for leisure or pleasure.
- Competitors active in sporting equestrian disciplines such as eventing, dressage or jumping.
- Racing Industry.

The scope and breadth of the UK horse industry is both diverse and expansive. Current estimations of the numbers of horses and ponies within the UK suggested approximately 900,000–1 million horses being kept by 451,000 owners or carers (BETA, 2011). In 2011 there were approximately 14,956 racehorses in training (National Hunt and Flat racehorses) in 825 racing yards and 4,635 Thoroughbred foals were produced (BHA, 2011). The gross economic output of the equestrian sector is valued at £3.8bn/year (BETA, 2011). Maintenance of equine health is estimated to cost £344 million annually of which £254 million is fees for veterinary medicine and treatment (BETA, 2011) representing a significant contribution to the animal health industry as a whole. Health in the horse requires not only diligent attention to good husbandry and pasture management and routine prophylactic veterinary treatments such as vaccinations, but also contributions from paraprofessionals such as the veterinary pharmacist or SQP.

The UK differs from a number of other EU member states in that the horse is not considered to be a food producing animal. In certain EU countries horses are specifically bred for human consumption for example the Breton horse in France. In order to maintain public health across all member states, all horses are legally required to be issued with a passport from an authorised Passport Issuing Organisation (PIO). An example of the passport, which must remain with the horse at all times, is shown in Figure 6.1. It identifies the horse and