

Dear Sir/Madam

Scottish Bluetongue Vaccination Campaign

You should shortly receive information on the National Bluetongue Vaccination Campaign in Scotland. As you will know, bluetongue virus can infect ruminant and camelid animal species. As well as cattle and sheep, this includes goats, deer, llamas, alpacas, buffalo, and other exotic species that may be present in zoological parks or private collections such as antelope, gazelle and giraffe. Experience on the European continent has shown that some of these animal species can become seriously ill and may die, as a result of bluetongue infection.

The vaccination of cattle and sheep against bluetongue infection will be compulsory in Scotland. The National Bluetongue Vaccination Campaign will commence on 3rd November, with all cattle and sheep (except a small number of exempt animals) required to be fully vaccinated by the 30th of April 2009.

While vaccination of other ruminant and camelid species is not compulsory, it is **strongly recommended**, to protect your animals from bluetongue disease. Vaccination of all ruminant and camelid animals will also help to protect the livestock industry in Scotland by reducing the chances of bluetongue infection becoming established in Scotland's animal and midge populations.

Currently the use of bluetongue vaccine in species other than cattle and sheep is described as "off-licence". This is a normal arrangement for the use of veterinary medicines in less common animal species. It means that the use of bluetongue vaccine must be undertaken on the direction of the veterinary surgeon who is normally responsible for those animals. Vets have been advised that all ruminant and camelid species (other than sheep) require two doses of bluetongue vaccine given four weeks apart to be fully protected against the disease.

If you keep any camelid or ruminant animal species other than cattle and sheep, please contact your own veterinary practice to discuss bluetongue vaccination. Your vet will be happy to advise on the practicalities of bluetongue vaccination and order the required quantity of vaccine for use with your animals.