



ASSURING THE SAFETY, QUALITY AND EFFICACY
OF VETERINARY MEDICINES

Advertising **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

All advertisements for veterinary medicinal products must comply with the Veterinary Medicines Regulations. The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) has worked closely with National Office of Animal Health (NOAH) to create a Code of Practice which sets the standard for promotions and by doing so adds more detail to the regulations themselves. The Code also enables the industry to self police complaints about advertising and promotions and this arrangement is welcomed by the VMD.

Manufacture

1. What claims can I make in my advertising literature?

An advertisement can contain any factual claim about the product as long as the claim is supported by the summary of product characteristics (SPC).

It is an offence to advertise a veterinary medicinal product if the advertisement is misleading or contains any false information.

2. Where can I publish my advertising literature?

Advertisements for POM-V products may only feature in publications aimed at veterinary surgeons, pharmacists, veterinary nurses and professional keepers of animals.

Advertisements for POM-VPS products may only feature in publications aimed at veterinary surgeons, pharmacists, suitably qualified persons (SQPs), other veterinary health care professionals, professional keepers of animals and owners or keepers of horses.

There are no restrictions placed on the advertising of NFA-VPS and AVM-GSL products in terms of the target audience.

Wholesale Supply

3. I supply human medicinal products for veterinary use under the cascade. Can I advertise authorised human medicinal products to the veterinary sector?

You may send a price list detailing authorised human medicinal product(s) to a veterinary surgeon only when specifically requested by the veterinary surgeon for use under the cascade.

The list must clearly state that the product(s) does not have a marketing authorisation for veterinary use.

Retail Supply

4. Can I display posters for prescription products in my waiting room/retail area?

Advertising literature for any product categorised as POM-V or POM-VPS may not be displayed in public areas, including waiting areas.

5. Is it acceptable to store prescription products within view of a public area?

We do not consider the storage of veterinary medicines within view of a public area (e.g. on display behind a retail counter) to be an advert as no one product is being promoted. This practice is acceptable as long as no attempt is made to make any product(s) more prominent than the others.

6. How do I promote my prices without advertising the products?

A pricelist is not considered to be advertising material, providing that it does not feature any product(s) more prominently than the rest. Pricelists may be displayed in public areas such as waiting rooms. Font size/colour/formatting etc... should be consistent so that no particular product(s) is highlighted.

7. Can I send my clients vaccination reminder cards produced by the manufacturer of my preferred product?

Any document that features information about a single product is deemed to be advertising. It is fine to send a complimentary vaccination reminder card to a client which features a company 'strapline':

i.e. 'Brought to you by (company name), makers of (product brand name)'.

8. Can I mention a specific prescription product name in an animal health information note to make clients aware of e.g. the dangers of lungworm infections in dogs, if I send it exclusively to existing clients that own dogs?

No, you can not mention a prescription product by name. It is however, acceptable to mention the active ingredient by name as long as the active ingredients of all suitable products are listed.

9. Can I send literature that features a company 'strapline' to clients?

Yes, the following strapline is fine.

'Brought to you by (company name), makers of (product brand name)'.

Online Retail Supply

10. I operate an online retail outlet for veterinary medicines, how do I feature the prescription products I supply without 'advertising' them?

You may feature prescription medicines on your website in a 'price list' format. This may include a small photo as long as all photos are the same size and all prescription products are given equal prominence. Font size/colour/formatting etc... should be consistent so that no particular product(s) is highlighted.

11. Can I run a special offer promotion (e.g. Buy One Get One Free) for prescription products?

A prescription product may only be supplied in accordance with a veterinary prescription, issued following a clinical assessment of the animal in question. Any promotion that attempts to influence the decision of the prescribing professional, especially for financial gain, would be inappropriate.

An advertisement of this nature would give unacceptable prominence of certain products over others and therefore is not permitted.

12. Can I run a special offer promotion (e.g. Buy One Get One Free) for non-prescription products?

Yes, there is nothing in law to prevent this type of promotion but the VMD encourages the responsible marketing of all medicines so that customers purchase only the amount needed to treat their animals.

13. I am a veterinary surgeon who operates an online retail outlet. My website features an advice forum. Am I allowed to mention specific prescription products in response to client questions?

If the advice forum is accessible to the general public then it is not appropriate to name prescription products.

14. Can I advertise individual POM-V and POM-VPS products on 'Google Ads'?

Google Ads are by definition an advert and therefore it is illegal to use them to advertise prescription products.

15. Can I advertise an unauthorised veterinary medicinal product i.e. a veterinary medicine that does not hold a UK marketing authorisation?

No, the advertisement of an unauthorised veterinary medicinal product is illegal. However a price list of authorised human medicinal products and their prices can be sent to a veterinary surgeon, upon request, for use under the cascade.

Further Information

For more information about the Code of Practice please visit NOAH's website (www.noah.co.uk).

For general information please visit the VMD website (www.vmd.gov.uk)

If you require any further information on advertising veterinary medicinal products please contact Jennifer Mills on 01932 338457.