

Removal of the active substance Fenbendazole for use in pigeons from Schedule 6 (Exemption for small pet animals).

The VMD wishes to make companies aware that fenbendazole is no longer permitted for use in pigeons under Schedule 6 (Exemptions for small pet animals) of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations (VMR) 2013.

With effect from 15 July 2019

- Fenbendazole products which have pigeons as the only target species: Manufacture must cease
- Fenbendazole products which have pigeons as a target species, plus additional target species: Pigeons must no longer be included as a target species in the product literature

The VMD has become aware of peer-reviewed published literature indicating that fenbendazole has a low margin of safety in pigeons. Overdose is likely to result in a low white blood cell count (leukopaenia, heteropaenia and bone marrow hypoplasia), damage to the rapidly dividing cells of the crop and small intestinal epithelium and, ultimately, death.

Because of the narrow margin of safety and severe consequences associated with overdose, the VMD has concluded that fenbendazole must only be used in pigeons under the direction of a veterinary surgeon and should therefore no longer be exempt from the provisions of the VMR under Schedule 6.

The VMD refers to paragraph 4 of Schedule 6 of the VMR, which states 'The Secretary of State may suspend or revoke the approval (or limit it to a smaller number of species) if it is demonstrated that the substance requires veterinary control'.

If you have concerns regarding your pigeon health then please contact your vet for advice.