

Animal medicines seizure notice: Border Force, East Midlands Airport

News story

Details of seizure notice served to Border Force, East Midlands Airport.



The following veterinary medicines were identified by a courier company based at East Midlands Airport. The products were then detained and subsequently seized from Border Force.

This parcel was addressed to a residential premises in the UK and contained:

- 30 x AbGard, Omeprazole Oral Paste 37%w/w
- 10 sachets of AbPrazole Plus x

These products are intended for use in horses and are not authorised veterinary medicines in the UK.

The medicines were seized under Regulation 25 (Importation of unauthorised veterinary medicinal products) of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013.

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Escalation of violence in Ethiopia: Minister for Africa statement

Press release

Minister for Africa James Duddridge has issued a statement on the escalation

of violence in Ethiopia



Following an escalation in violence in Ethiopia, Minister for Africa James Duddridge said:

The UK calls for immediate de-escalation and the protection of civilians following further violence in Ethiopia and attacks on Asmara, Eritrea over the weekend.

We are working closely with humanitarian agencies to ensure that aid reaches civilians affected by the fighting.

Background

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab spoke to Prime Minister Abiy on 10 November, emphasising the need for protection of civilians and humanitarian access.

The British Ambassador in Addis Ababa continues to raise the need for de-escalation and an immediate halt to violence with our partners and all parties involved.

UK-funded partners in Tigray are working hard to deliver support in extremely challenging circumstances. This includes to delivering assistance to refugees and host communities including shelter; health; water, sanitation and hygiene; nutrition and protection support.

We continue to raise the need for humanitarian access and restoration of basic services with senior officials in Ethiopia.

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UK and US sign aviation agreement to protect vital travel links

News story

Transport Secretary signs bilateral agreement safeguarding the future of air travel between the UK and US.



- Transport Secretary, US Secretary of State and US Transportation Secretary co-sign Air Services Agreement ahead of the end of EU transition period
- arrangement safeguards flights between the UK and US
- agreement reinforces the UK's trading relationship with the US, worth over £230 billion

The Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, has today (17 November 2020) signed a new bilateral Air Services Agreement safeguarding the future of air travel between the UK and US past the end of the transition period. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo signed on behalf of the US, along with Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao.

The arrangement will replace the current EU agreement, preserving the continuation of travel, protecting the economy and ensuring the UK remains one of the world's leading aviation hubs for both travellers and businesses.

Tens of millions of passengers a year use these vital transatlantic routes, contributing to a trading relationship with the US worth over £230 billion. Today's announcement will help ensure that the UK remains open for business with major economies around the world by maintaining this critical global link.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

The Air Services Agreement will allow us to continue to travel and trade with one of our closest friends and allies, working together to mutually boost our economies, either side of the Atlantic. This

is just one of many steps we're taking as we move towards a bright new future at the end of the transition period.

The agreement will enter into full legal force after completion of both sides' procedures for an international agreement.

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[Royal Navy warship sails into Arctic Circle for High North operation](#)

Once again demonstrating the UK's commitment to the High North after leading a multi-national task group into the region in September, the Royal Navy has sailed above the Scandinavian countries into the North Cape.

By successfully operating in the challenging sub-zero conditions, the warship gained valuable experience of operating in the icy High North environment and further enhanced the UK's cold weather capability.

Minister for the Armed Forces James Heappey said:

The High North and Arctic region is vitally important to our security of the UK, as well as some of our closest Allies in Scandinavia, the Baltic Region and northern Europe.

Deployments such as this, as well as our active engagement in the Northern Group and leadership of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), demonstrate to our allies and adversaries alike that the UK will be forward-leaning in supporting the security and stability of the region.

On approach to the Arctic Circle, Type 23 frigate HMS Lancaster took the opportunity to gain valuable training experience alongside the Norwegian Navy – one of the UK's closest partners in the region. The Norwegian warship HNoMS Fridtjof Nansen joined HMS Lancaster for a passing exercise that allowed both NATO navies to further boost their cooperation capability, following previous shared activity in the region earlier this year.

The operation, entirely conducted in international waters and in a responsible manner, demonstrated the freedom of navigation on the high seas provided by the rules-based international system. This was also the case in

September, when Type 23 frigate HMS Sutherland, supported by RFA Tidespring, commanded a task group comprising Norwegian frigate HNoMS Thor Heyerdahl and the United States Navy's destroyer USS Ross.

Norway is a fellow member of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF); the UK-led high-readiness force of northern European nations that is capable of countering hybrid and conventional threats, as well as the Northern Group; a UK initiative formed of 12 nations aimed at providing effective defence and security cooperation in the region.

Commander William Blackett, the Commanding Officer of HMS Lancaster, said:

For HMS Lancaster, this short operation was a great way to close out a challenging year of trials and training. The Queen's Frigate and her fine company have come a long way since emerging from refit – we are back where we belong on the front line and ready for the next task.

Through such groups, the UK is committed to working with Allies to upholding the security of the High North and Arctic and recent deployments ensure that our ships and people are ready and able to operate in the region. Changes to the Arctic landscape wrought by declining sea ice levels open up new trade routes and raise the risk of economic competition and states looking to monopolise the region – sharpening the need for the UK's Armed Forces to remain ready to respond to any potential instability.

[Response to media coverage of the UK government's procurement of the Moderna vaccine](#)

Front page articles in The Guardian and Metro today (16 November) regarding the UK government's procurement of the Moderna vaccine are entirely misleading.

It is inaccurate to say that Britain is "back of the queue" for vaccines, or there was a scramble to secure access to Moderna's vaccine.

Firstly, if the Moderna vaccine is approved by our regulators, it will be available to the UK in spring 2021 at the earliest – the same timetable as other countries in Europe.

Secondly, the UK was already in advanced discussions with Moderna for some time to procure 5 million doses of their vaccine. Yesterday we were able to

finalise that agreement following the publication of their positive Phase III results.

As Moderna is currently scaling up their European supply chain, their vaccine was never going to be available in the UK before spring next year – no matter when we ordered it.

Thirdly, the UK is one of the first countries in Europe to sign a deal with Moderna. Furthermore, the UK was also the first country in the world to sign a binding agreement for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine in July 2020.

The EU are yet to formally sign a deal with either developer. If we had joined the EU vaccine programme, the UK would not have secured doses from either Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna at this stage.

Finally, the UK will be one of the first countries in the world to receive the vaccine being developed by the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca, of which we have ordered 100 million doses – if it meets robust standards of safety and effectiveness.

The UK has now secured access to 355 million doses from seven different vaccine developers, more per head than almost any other country. This includes 40 million doses of Pfizer/BioNTech's vaccine, which is expected to begin delivery as early as December 2020, if approved by our regulators.

The government, through the work of the Vaccine Taskforce, has put the UK in an extremely strong position if and when a vaccine meets robust standards of safety and effectiveness.

Read our full [announcement around securing 5m doses of the Moderna vaccine](#), as well as our [response to the Pfizer vaccine data](#).