

The VMD's online services will be unavailable 26 to 30 August

News story

The VMD's online services will be shut down from 5pm Friday 26 August for essential maintenance.



Access Veterinary Medicines Digital Services

Sign in to your account

Apply for Marketing Authorisations, send secure messages and report adverse events for businesses that you're associated with.

Sign in

Due to essential maintenance work the following services will be unavailable from 5pm Friday 26 August until 6am Tuesday 30:

- Special Import Service
- Export Certificates
- Animal Adverse Reaction Reporting
- Human Adverse Reaction Reporting
- Microchip Adverse Event Reporting
- Product Information Database
- Veterinary Medicines Digital Service

Along with access to the following Registers:

- Register of SQP Retailer Premises
- Register of SQPs
- List of Accredited Internet Retailers
- Register of Specific Manufacturing Authorisations – AVAs
- Register of Specific Manufacturing Authorisations – NFABBA, ESCCA
- Register of Veterinary-only GMP sites

In urgent cases where the VMD has previously issued a certificate for the animal(s) under your care, you may purchase and use an imported veterinary medicine prior to obtaining a certificate from the VMD. This is a special dispensation which only applies to the VMD online system during this essential maintenance period.

You should obtain an import certificate retrospectively as soon as possible and cease use if not subsequently granted.

We apologise for any inconvenience.

[Live firing exercise tests latest soldier systems](#)

Using a specially designed obstacle course, the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) team conducted a pilot study to assess the effects of the SA-80 L85A2 versus the L85A3 rifle with 6 soldiers from 5th Battalion, The Rifles.

The Soldier Weapon and Equipment Assessment Tool (SWEAT) tests the impact of soldier equipment on firing accuracy, consistency, speed and mobility.

These tests were executed as part of [NATO Science and Technology Organization \(STO\)](#) Research Task Group SAS-145. This research is overseen by STO's System Analysis and Studies (SAS) Panel, NATO's Expert Panel for Analytical Advice, which promotes the exchange of trial data and enhance interoperability within the Alliance.

[SWEAT trial](#)

Jon from Dstl said:

The idea behind the SWEAT course is that anyone can measure the effects of future soldier capability, such as a new weapons system, new boots, a new helmet or new body armour, and assess the effect that will provide upon the individual's lethality.

This course for the UK, in the future, will be used to measure the effects of new capabilities for soldiers.

The final objective of the trial is for it to be used and developed by NATO nations to develop their own courses that are similar enough to allow interoperability between nations.

A soldier from 5th Battalion, The Rifles, runs the obstacle course

Scientists make observations during the trial

The 2-day exercise took place on Salisbury Plain using a UK SA-80 L85 A2 and updated A3 variants of the individual weapon.

Participants ran the course twice to compare results.

The course consisted of 14 firing points and 36 actions, requiring soldiers to engage targets ranging from 25m to 400m from a variety of firing positions.

Elizabeth, of the US Army, observing on behalf of NATO, said:

It's doing something novel and innovative.

Taking different components that have been separated, so lethality, survivability and mobility – bringing them into a course that comprehensively tests soldier systems.

It's a much better evaluation than has existed before.

Find out more about [Dstl's areas of work](#) and [how we support the MOD and wider government](#) with cutting- edge science and technology.

[Dental merger raises competition concerns in parts of Yorkshire and Derbyshire](#)

Press release

An initial investigation by the CMA into an acquisition of dental practices has found competition concerns in parts of Doncaster, Yorkshire and Alfreton, Derbyshire.



Image credit: CMA

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) carried out a Phase 1 investigation into the completed purchase of Dental Partners Group Limited (Dental Partners) by Riviera Bidco Limited (Riviera) – owner of existing dental practice operator Rodericks Dental Limited (Rodericks).

The investigation looked at the potential impact of the merger in the areas where both businesses currently offer NHS or private dental treatments. While sufficient competition will remain after the merger in most cases, the CMA found that the merger would raise competition concerns in the provision of general NHS dental treatments, such as check-ups and fillings, in areas within Doncaster and Alfreton.

The removal of Dental Partners as an independent competitor could lead to reduced choice for patients in these two areas, where the availability of NHS dental appointments is already limited.

Prior to the conclusion of the investigation, the businesses accepted that the merger would raise concerns in these 2 areas and asked the CMA to move straight to a discussion of potential remedies to address these concerns.

Riviera now has 5 working days to formally offer proposals to the CMA to address the competition concerns identified. The CMA would then have a further 5 working days to consider whether to accept these in principle instead of referring the case to a Phase 2 investigation.

Sorcha O'Carroll, CMA Senior Director of Mergers, said:

Residents in parts of Doncaster and Alfreton rely on accessing quality NHS dental treatment when it is needed – we're looking at this deal to ensure this can continue.

It's now for the businesses involved to address our concerns, to prevent a loss of competition in these areas and resolve any need for further investigation.

For more information please see the [Riviera Bidco Limited / Dental Partners Group Limited case page](#).

1. More information on the CMA's fast track procedure can be found in section 7 of Mergers: [Guidance on the CMA's jurisdiction and procedure](#).
2. The CMA is, in most cases, required to issue a Phase 1 decision within 40 working days. Merging parties are required to formally offer proposed remedies (undertakings in lieu (UILs)) within 5 working days after receiving the CMA's Phase 1 decision and the CMA then decides, within 10 working days after the Phase 1 decision, whether to provisionally accept the UILs offered. The CMA then has 50 working days (subject to an extension of up to 40 working days) to consider whether to finally accept these remedies.

3. The CMA's concerns relate to the provision of NHS treatment by the parties within parts of Doncaster, Yorkshire and Alfreton, Derbyshire. The cost of treatments through these appointments is strictly regulated by the NHS – so patients will pay the same if they are able to get treatment.
4. All enquiries from journalists should be directed to the CMA press office by email on press@cma.gov.uk or by phone on 020 3738 6460.
5. All enquiries from the general public should be directed to the CMA's General Enquiries team on general.enquiries@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6000.

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[STEP forward to fusion](#)

UK Atomic Energy Authority has confirmed several partners this month to help advance its ambitious STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production) programme as it seeks to demonstrate the commercial viability of fusion energy.

Led by Atkins and energy transition specialists Assystem, the Tranche 1 Engineering Delivery Partner will play a critical role in STEP's ambitions to design and build a commercial-scale prototype fusion energy plant through to March 2024. The partners will inform the development of the concept design for STEP, which is one of the programme's key objectives in Tranche 1.

Tristram Denton, Head of Commercial and Programme Development for STEP, said: "Fusion has great potential to deliver safe, sustainable, low carbon energy for generations to come, and STEP is leading the way. It's an ambitious programme operating at the forefront of science, technology and engineering.

"It's clear we must make significant changes to address the effects of climate change, and STEP's delivery partners will play a crucial role in our quest to making fusion a reality."

Meanwhile, UKAEA has teamed up with Oxford Sigma (OS), Frazer-Nash Consultancy (FNC) and TÜV UK to train the next generation of fusion engineers in tackling the engineering challenges of commercial fusion energy.

Training material developed in conjunction with UKAEA's partners will ensure fusion engineers are equipped with state-of-the-art skills on designing for, and mitigating against, radiation damage in fusion energy devices.

Terry Thompson, STEP Control Systems Lead, UKAEA, said: “Through UKAEA’s collaboration with OS, FNC and TÜV UK we have managed to bring together a body of material which represents the leading edge in relation to international understanding of radiation effects and good design practices, which will drive forward the development of the first fusion power plants and fusion energy as a commercial reality.”

Mark Anderton, Engineer at Oxford Sigma, added: “The skills and guidance provided in the training package we’ve produced in partnership with UKAEA, Frazer-Nash, and TÜV UK are invaluable resources for the next generation of engineers. It is an exciting step forward in achieving fusion whilst simultaneously supporting the young people tasked with our future.”

The announcement of STEP’s site location is expected later this year following UKAEA’s recommendation to the Secretary of State for the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The STEP site will become a global hub for a wide range of engineering, technological and scientific expertise, leading to massive economic opportunities for the UK.

For further information, visit: step.ukaea.uk

[Government seeks views on reducing livestock methane production](#)

The UK Government has today launched a [UK-wide call for evidence](#) asking agricultural industry, scientists and the wider public for information on the use of new types of animal feed products that can reduce methane emissions from livestock.

Ruminant livestock – cows and sheep – are the leading cause of farm greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. However, feed products with methane inhibiting properties have shown potential in reducing reduce GHG emissions, especially from housed cattle. These products may include ingredients like methane production inhibitors, seaweeds, essential oils, organic acids, probiotics, and antimicrobials.

The consultation has been launched in agreement with the Devolved Administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The governments are seeking to find out how farmers and agri-businesses can increase adoption of this technology to support more sustainable protein production. It will consider the current role of feed additives within our farming systems, and the potential barriers that could prevent the introduction of methane suppressing feed products in both the near and long-term future.

In 2019, agriculture accounted for 10% of total UK greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, with methane accounting for approximately 54% of agricultural emissions. The UK Government has set an ambitious target to achieve net-zero GHG emissions across the whole UK economy by 2050. To meet this target all sectors must reduce their GHG emissions.

Agricultural greenhouse gas emissions have reduced by 16% since 1990 (as of 2020) thanks to innovation and advances in technology, with many farms using more efficient agricultural practices. Government emissions and production statistics suggest that since 1990 we are producing a litre of milk with 21% less GHG emissions. Efficiency gains in dairy farming mean that we are now producing 11% more milk than we were in 2000 with 24% fewer cows.

Farming Minister, Victoria Prentis said:

“We’ve set out ambitious targets to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and it’s right to consider how we can help farmers produce food sustainably and reduce emissions from agriculture further.

“Well managed livestock can provide various environmental benefits and meat and dairy can both be an important part of a balanced diet. Through this call for evidence we’ll better understand the promising role emerging feed additive technologies for cattle could play and how government can help drive its development.”

Minister for Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths said:

“We need to develop a resilient and prosperous agriculture sector which reduces its carbon emissions and greenhouse gases through a range of approaches including the possibility of adoption of important technologies. We want to work with our farmers and industry to achieve this and I encourage everyone involved in the industry in Wales to respond to the call for evidence.”

Scotland’s Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands, Mairi Gougeon, said:

“The Scottish Government has ambitious climate change targets and, to meet them, agriculture in Scotland needs to reduce its emissions by 31% from 2019 levels by 2032. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas and therefore methane reducing feed additives have the potential to be a crucial part of the solutions that the agriculture sector needs to deploy towards achieving our climate ambitions.

“That is why I welcome this four nations effort to improve our understanding of the use of this innovative new technology in the sector, which will inform each government’s approach to future policy-making in this area. I would encourage the Scottish farming community to respond to the call for evidence and make their views known.”

Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Minister Edwin Poots MLA said:

“Following my consultation on future agricultural policy for Northern Ireland earlier this year, I announced that the use of feed additives to reduce enteric methane emissions, nitrogen and phosphorus outputs would be progressed by collaborative industry research. This UK wide call for evidence will provide further guidance to guide us along the path to reduced methane emissions from our livestock industry.”

While food choices can have an impact on greenhouse gas emissions, well managed livestock also provide environmental benefits such as supporting biodiversity, protecting the character of the countryside and generating important income for rural communities.

A robust approval process is adopted for these products and takes into consideration the health and welfare of the animals, food safety and implications for human health and the wider environmental impact of these products.

On 27 June 2019, the UK became the first major economy in the world to set a legally binding target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions from across the whole UK economy by 2050. The UK was also amongst the first signatories of the Global Methane Pledge launched at COP26, aiming to reduce global methane emissions by at least 30% by 2030, against 2020 levels.

As part of the effort to achieve our net zero ambitions, the UK Government and the Devolved Governments are considering a wide range of measures to reduce emissions from our agricultural sectors. The use of feed additives and other animal feed with methane suppressing properties have been shown to potentially reduce methane emissions, especially from dairy and beef cattle, and is one such measure being explored.