

Managing Veterinary Medicines episode 1: Regulation and responsible and legal use of medicines

RCVS Knowledge

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This week's episode covers Modules 1 and 2 of the Managing Veterinary Medicines courses: Regulation and Responsible and legal use of medicines.

Pam Mosedale

Hi everyone. This morning I'm going to talk to Jackie Cattrell, who's lead inspector at the VMD, Leah Spears who works at Elanco and Andrew Patterson who works at RM Jones and all three of them are SQPs. We're going to talk a little bit about CPD and how SQP/RAMAs can access this.

I think you probably all agree that it's very important that SQP/RAMAs know the veterinary medicines regulations, but I guess not many of you would use them as light bedtime reading. Sorry, Jackie. But so do you think any sort of short webinars would be good to make these a bit more accessible to the SQPs?

Andrew Pattison

Yeah, I would. I think I watched the presentation that Jackie did when just before the new regulations came into force a couple of weeks ago. And although when you first look at them, the whole thing looks absolutely terrifying. But when you've got that webinar situation where Jackie goes through things very carefully and lays them out so you can understand them and even I could understand them and then to be able to ask questions at the end.

It makes that terrifying detail actually look usable and understandable for us to get on with. So by the time it was over and the questions were answered, we were much more confident in how we were going to do and what we were going to do and why we were going to do it really.

Pam Mosedale

Thanks Andrew, that's really interesting. And these webinars are all in short little bits as well, none of them are longer than 20 minutes, the ones we've got on the website, so they're easy to dip into. But it's not just you, it Jackie, who's providing these from the VMD?

Jackie Catterall

Definitely not. Every single team has been involved with the RCVS Knowledge Bitesize webinars on there. Everybody from authorisations, right through legislation, the supply team, enforcement, us in inspections, absolutely everybody because we're trying to give you the whole package.

Pam Mosedale

And that again makes it even better I think when there's lots of different voices saying the same things, saying different things all around the legislation. So Leah, I think you've had a look at these, how did you find them?

Leah Speirs

I like the fact that they were in bite-sized chunks and it helped me because I was able to do them in between other jobs. I was traveling for a few days last week and I was able to do it while I was on the train. It just helped a lot to have them in such an easily accessible way. Not only could I access them on my laptop, I could also get them from my phone as I say while I was traveling and it was so useful. And yes, I'd like to highlight the fact that you have different people coming in, you hear different voices. It's not the same person all the time, makes a huge difference and keeps it interesting.

Pam Mosedale

And we cover quite a lot of topics there, mostly around the actual legislation, as Andrew pointed out with the changes in the VMR, that's something we all have to keep on top of. But we also have some sections around antimicrobial resistance and an introduction to anthelmintic resistance. Do you think these will be useful to SQPs?

Andrew Pattison

I would certainly, I think, antibiotic resistance is one of my causes, if you like. I really sort of bang on about it to anybody who'll listen and I think it's when you've got something like that that puts it out in clear and better ways than I can, I it's really, really good for everybody else to hear. The other example I would have on the AMTRA website was on the horse worm sales legislation which can be a bit confusing. I'm not very equine based although I'm equine qualified and I found that really really perfect so I think anybody who can get into these things it's well worth it.

Pam Mosedale

Lovely. And we have someone from the VMD actually talking about the theoretical basis around anthelmintic resistance, don't we Jackie?

Jackie Catterall

Yeah, it's a great section. think it's in two, module two, I'm not sure, but it is well worth a listen. And it's not just for our SQPs. We find when we're out, a lot of SQPs go, we don't do farm, we don't need to know about that. Yes, you do. Anthelmintic resistance is just as likely in horses and pets as it is in farm animals. So it is critical for everybody to listen to that one. And it is well worth a listen.

Pam Mosedale

And I think AMR too, it's not, I know SQPs can't prescribe antibiotics, but it's an interesting background thing to know about, isn't it?

Jackie Catterall

To be aware of it definitely because we are all responsible for tackling AMR. Every pet owner, every farmer, every vet, every doctor, we've all got our part to play so the more we know about it the more we can do our part well.

Leah Speirs

It's also nice to hear it from different sides. If it's always coming from the same place, we're used to hearing SCOPs and those who are involved in SCOPs talking about it. We're used to pharmaceutical companies talking about it, but it's nice to hear it coming from RCVS knowledge and from the VMD, et cetera.

Pam Mosedale

And another advantage of these is that because they're all short webinars, it should be reasonably easy to update. And we've already had to update one or two with changes coming from the RCVS and coming from VMD. So hopefully, we're going to keep this resource really up to date, anything you look at in the book or whatever is quickly out of date, isn't it?

Jackie Catterall

You've just got to look at the NOAH compendiums that SQPs get given. They're out of date as soon as you get them because things are always changing. So having a live resource online, which is as up to date as you can possibly get, is the best thing ever. And that's why things like the NOAH compendium have gone onto an online app now rather than the paper copies. We've got to keep up with the changes.

Andrew Pattison

Yeah, I say I would encourage anybody, any SQP or anybody working in animal health, I suppose, to have the NOAH Compendium on the phone as the app is a fantastic, absolutely fantastic little tool. It's so much easier than leaping through a book. can never find the latest book in the drawer or whatever it is. Also when I started in the industry in the distant past, the no compendium that we got included every medicine as POM as well or POM-V as well. And of course the one that SQPs get now is just VPS, but the online one is everything. It makes it so useful.

Pam Mosedale

That's a really interesting point, Andrew, because these two modules are talking about the first one is regulation, the second one is responsible use, and we've talked about AMR and anthelmintic resistance. But in the regulation one, we talk about some things that you would think on the surface are not relevant to SQPs, like, for instance, the Prescribing Cascade. But do you think it's useful to have that sort of information available to SQPs?

Andrew Pattison

I think so, yeah. I think it's, you know what's going on and everything, mean, you're not challenging vets, but if you know what they're using, if a farmer tells you the name of it, and you can look it up and see what it is, to my mind, it's useful and interesting.

Leah Speirs

It's useful for the SQPs to understand the cascade. Again, just like many parts of legislation, so that they understand how important it is for veterinary involvement in circumstances where these products are not licensed. And I think that's the biggest thing is, know, pet owners, equine owners, farmers can get upset if they're trying to, they want a medicine that perhaps isn't labelled, isn't licensed for that use. But when you fully explain to them that there hasn't been any trial work done in this, this is a decision made by a vet taking into account all the information they have, which is probably fairly limited. There needs to be veterinary involvement here. This is not something that we can just hand over the counter and expect everything to be fine. So I think once you understand it as an SQP, it's much easier to have those conversations with the people who are getting the medicines and using the medicines.

Jackie Catterall

Definitely, it's one of those things that we get a lot of SQPs saying, no, it doesn't apply to us, I don't need to know. But you never know. You could get a prescription presented to you in your retail store for a product that a vet's prescribed and the animal owner comes to you for the supply. We get it a lot with goats, llamas, alpacas, where they just want something that is more available and readily bought from an agricultural merchants or an SQP retailer than it is for the vets to specially order it in. So an SQP could see a Cascade prescription and needs to know what it looks like, whether it's valid and what to do about it. So SQPs do need some Cascade information for them.

Andrew Pattison

Yeah, I think you're quite right Jackie. Also, interestingly, when Zolvix was first launched as a POM-V, one or two of my colleagues just said, because I said I'm going to go to this training, I'm really interested by it, that they were offering, that was Novartis they're not offering locally. And two or three said, why bother it? It's only for the vets, we can't sell it.

That is no good at all. We need to know and I think I think that was of those older colleagues that retired now but I think - there's me in my 60s saying older colleagues - but you never know and you need to know the principles of anything that's going on if you have a good understanding of stuff with your customer, your farmer, you need to know what's going on, the things you can't affect, whatever.

Pam Mosedale

Absolutely, it's part of the sort of holistic thing of the job, isn't it? If you know all the surrounding information, not just your narrow little bits of information that you might think you know. And, you know, things change as well. So it's just really, really good to keep up to date.

Leah Speirs

Huskvac would be another example of that. Understanding the fact that you can use Huskvac in the control of worms is not something that an SQP can reach for, but they can say to the farmer, look, it's probably a good idea to include this. Can you go and speak to your vet about it? So I think, yeah, that's another good example, but it's just understanding the bigger picture and not just what you can prescribe.

Pam Mosedale

Vets need to understand what SQPs can do too and we've got some information in this course about that so because I think there is you know it's a two-way street and quite a few vets don't really understand what SQP/RAMAs do so I think that's important to from the education point of view. So when the SQP Ramas have looked at all this the way that you're going to get to your points I suppose from AMTRA is by reflecting on it so I wonder if you'd like to sort of help your colleagues because I know certainly when this came in from for vets, first I was a bit like, what on does that mean? So what would you say about that, Leah, about them reflecting on this?

Leah Speirs

Certainly when it comes to reflection, it's really about what did I learn? How am I going to use this? What's my takeaway? That's how I see the reflection for CPD. When it comes to legislation, I always find trying to bring it to life, make it real. What does it mean? Why does it exist? Those kind of things are the thoughts that cross my mind. This is not just someone sitting in a big ivory tower saying, you must do this because I

say so. All of this legislation has come around to protect animal health, human health, etc. And there is a reason for all of it. And I think from my point of view, if I was doing all of these legislation, I'm always talking about why is this a rule? Why do we have to do this particular thing? What difference does it make? And I think if you can understand it on that level, it all suddenly makes sense and everything becomes far clearer. And it's much easier to remember as well. You know, if someone tells you remember this rule and they don't explain why it's a rule, you're not going to remember it. But if someone says, remember this rule because if you, you know, the result of this rule is that something better happens or et cetera, then you're going to remember exactly why that is. Yeah, I think I would focus all my reflection onto what your new understanding is having watched and listened to these little modules, because it does help you when you hear someone discussing the reasons behind it and how they've come around to help you put that into some decent semblance of understanding that you can write down and reflect upon.

Andrew Pattison

It's interesting that I know that we're all already the company I work for, we're also involved in AgChem and a lot of the training we get with them, they always have towards the end of the presentation what they call take home points. And if you look at those, that's actually is usually your understanding, isn't it? So I think if if the training, if there were some of those take home points introduced in as that people could get used to the reflection, that is your reflection, something would probably make people happier, something.

Pam Mosedale

Yeah, well, luckily, Andrew, there are, and we have to call them this rather educational term, intended learning outcomes, but to me they are take home points for each of the little webinars. And there's also quizzes at the end of each section and a big, and a quiz at the end of the whole thing, which for if vets were doing it or people in veterinary practices were doing it for a practice standards thing, they have to do the whole lot. But for SQPs, they can just dip into it. But there are questions and things. So, Jackie, I'll go over to you to sort of bring this together. How do you think SQP's learning from these resources might be useful to you?

Jackie Catterall

Any learning that SQPs do is useful to us, especially if it's on the legislation. We had the huge change in May of the update to the regs and it was a lot. And it is hard for anyone, and I'm including myself in this, to assimilate that amount of information into

something that's been ingrained in your head for anything up to the last 12 years. It's not easy to get it right. That's why we've tried to make it into bite-sized pieces and to make it a lot more accessible. And as Leah was saying earlier, try and bring it to life. We're forever coming up with silly little phrases or acronyms. And one of my favourites is, if in doubt, shout. So if anybody's got any questions, the inspections team are here to help. We're not here to hinder, we're here to help.

But from a reflection point of view, I usually focus on the things that sent me down a rabbit hole. So halfway through a webinar, I'll suddenly realise something and I'll start Googling it. And they're the ones that I reflect on the most because that's a chink in my armour. And then I usually end up writing about how I'm going to implement what I've now used in my everyday work, because that's the bit that will impact on me the most.

So it's not just the take home points, it's what you're going to do with them. It's a big help to us to be able to see the SQPs have taken into consideration the latest information, spoken to the customer and found out the best information from there. And the great example is prescribing rationale. It's a new thing that on all POMs, not NFA-VPS, just POM-Vs, you have to write down now.

And it's caused a lot of problems because it's a big generic term with very little actual explanation in it. So that's why we've tried to go all out on trying to explain it. But people will still get it wrong for a little while. As long as you're trying, we will point you in the right direction, help you get it right. Don't worry about it as long as you're trying to have a go. So, yeah, take your reflection and focus on the implementation, not just the, "I've learned something new. I'll write it down and then forget about it".

Pam Mosedale

That's so easy for that to happen. That's fantastic. Thank you all three of you. It's been amazing. I think there's some great advice there for the other SQP/RAMAs. So thank you for your time this morning.

Jackie Catterall

Thanks for the invite.

Andrew Pattison

Yeah, thank you very much. Pleasure.

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