

## **What if my pet's microchip fails?**

If the microchip cannot be read or found, so that its number cannot be matched up with the one on your pet's documents, your animal will not be allowed to travel under the Pet Travel Scheme. If your pet's microchip fails, you will need to either:

- make arrangements to put your pet into quarantine when you arrive in the UK or
- delay your journey back to the UK until your pet meets the conditions of PETS
- if your pet's microchip cannot be found, it will have to begin the PETS process again.

### **Failed microchip procedure**

Before considering removal of a microchip from an animal, every effort should be made to read it. The vet should first ensure that the scanner is working by testing it on the microchip in another animal or an unimplanted microchip. Because microchips can migrate within an animal, the whole animal should be scanned slowly and thoroughly. If the microchip is not of a type usually used in Europe, it may be necessary to try a different type of scanner. Another option is to scan the animal with other, more powerful, scanners. As a final measure to locate the microchip the animal may be given an X-ray.

If it is established that an animal has a failed microchip the following action may be taken. This action involves surgery and the animal's health and welfare must always be considered by the vet in deciding whether to follow the procedure.

The failed microchip should be surgically removed from the animal and sent to the manufacturer with an explanation of the circumstances and a request to (a) verify its number in their laboratory and (b) provide a letter to the veterinary surgeon who removed it confirming the number. The vet should not refer to the number of the failed microchip. If an animal in quarantine needs to have its microchip removed outside the quarantine premises, the vet must first obtain authorisation from the Divisional Veterinary Manager at the local Animal Health Divisional Office.

At the same time as the vet surgically removes the failed microchip, a new microchip should be implanted and the vet should retain a formal record of the new identification. The vet must also provide the pet owner with a veterinary certificate containing a declaration that a non-functional microchip has been removed and sent to the manufacturer. The certificate must also record the method of despatch

together with details of the name and address of the owner, and the name and breed of the pet. This certificate should be on practice headed paper, signed and validated with the practice stamp.

If the manufacturer is able to read the failed microchip it should provide a document to the veterinary surgeon confirming that the microchip has been identified, the date it was read and stating the number. This document, along with the veterinary surgeon's certificate, can then be used to support the re-identification of the pet.

The pet owner should take the document from the microchip manufacturer confirming the failed microchip number, the certificate from the vet, their pet and any documentation issued under the Pet Travel Scheme (PETS) that relates to the animal (e.g. passport) to their Local Veterinary Inspector (LVI), assuming that their vet is not an LVI.

The LVI must be satisfied, on the basis of the documentation presented, that the pet meets the requirements of the Pet Travel Scheme. If the animal has a PETS certificate or a third country official veterinary certificate, the LVI should issue a pet passport. In this case, or if the animal already has a pet passport, the LVI should make an entry in section XI of the passport. This should read "Microchip number [insert new number] was inserted on removal of failed microchip number [insert original chip number] which was originally implanted on [date] and sent to the manufacturer on [date] which read the number successfully on [date]". The LVI should sign, date and stamp this with his/her official stamp.

In addition to the letter from the laboratory confirming the number of the failed microchip, we recommend the LVI should give the pet owner as supporting evidence a letter on practice headed paper detailing similar information with a short note describing the circumstances in a little more detail. This should also be signed, dated and stamped.

The LVI should keep copies of the document(s) received from the laboratory stating the failed microchip's number and any other relevant documents, including a photocopy of Section XI of the passport and their separate statement. A copy of these documents should be sent to the Divisional Veterinary Manager.

Assuming the microchip number has been read by the laboratory, and the LVI is satisfied that the animal is PETS compliant, there is no need for another rabies vaccination until the next booster is due in accordance with the vaccine manufacturer's datasheet. Neither is there need for a further blood sample to be taken and tested, or a six month wait.

If the number of the failed microchip cannot be verified, the pet will need to begin the PETS process again.

The pet-owner has to arrange and pay for quarantine in all cases. Defra cannot get involved in questions of liability; this is a matter for the pet-owner, the microchip manufacturer and the person who implanted the chip. If an owner suffers loss as a result of a failed microchip they can take the matter to their local Trading Standards Department if they wish. However, we understand that insurance policies are now available which will cover the cost of quarantine if an animal's microchip cannot be read.

**If my pet's microchip cannot be read, and it goes into quarantine, will it have to stay in quarantine for six months?**

It depends upon whether the microchip can be read once the animal arrives in quarantine; if it can, it should be possible for the animal to be released early. In some cases, once an animal arrives in quarantine it may be possible to identify it. If so, the animal may be released from quarantine before the six month period has elapsed. We must emphasise that such cases would need to be looked at individually: no general guarantee can be given, and we must be satisfied that health conditions are properly respected.