

RCVS to review guidance on alternative therapy

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The RCVS standards committee has announced it is to review the college's guidance on homeopathy and other alternative and complementary veterinary medicines and therapies.



Until proven, therapies and treatments such as homeopathy should be classified as complementary rather than "alternative" and should be used alongside conventional treatment.

In a statement, the RCVS says the decision to review on 25 January has been made: "in light of a number of different factors. This includes changes to the way that homeopathy is viewed by the National Health Service, as well as a recent statement made by the Advertising Standards Authority regarding its advice and guidance on claims made in marketing materials [including websites] about homeopathic treatments."

Statement

The RCVS set out its position on complementary therapies, including homeopathy, with the following statement: "As the regulator of the veterinary profession, we emphasise the importance of evidence-based veterinary medicine. We recommend that there should therefore be a cautious approach to homeopathy for animals and that normal evidential standards be applied to

complementary treatments.

“We believe it is also essential that such treatments, until they can be proved, are complementary rather than ‘alternative’ and that they are therefore used alongside conventional treatment.

“However, whatever views there may be within the veterinary profession, it is clear that there is a demand from some clients for complementary therapies for their animals. It is better that they should seek advice from a veterinary surgeon... rather than turning to a practitioner who does not have veterinary training.”

‘Ready to cooperate’

A spokesman for the British Association of Homeopathic Veterinary Surgeons said: “We’ve spoken to the RCVS. They’re reviewing their position statement on complementary therapies, but they’re not looking at banning them, so I think this can only be a positive thing.

“As it stands at the moment the royal college supports us, and we have no reason to think that will change.”

- Read the full story and further reaction in the 9 January issue of *Veterinary Times*.