

ADVICE FOR VETERINARY SURGEONS AND TRAINERS

Long acting injections may cause problems in NGRC racing greyhounds

- NGRC requires all greyhounds to race drug free with the exception of licensed oestrus suppressants. This is to ensure that performance is not interfered with and for the welfare of each greyhound.
- Many medicines, especially when given by mouth or short-acting injection, are likely to clear the system by 7 days.
- There are some exceptions to this: some medicines take longer than others to be cleared from the greyhound's system, and in recent years some have been adjusted chemically, so that dosing can be less frequent as a result of increasing the duration of action. An example of this would be a sustained-release tablet or capsule.
- It is not possible for NGRC to give guidance on the excretion times (the time it takes for the substance to leave the system) of specific products. This information is not required to be provided by the manufacturer for the marketing authorisation, and is in any event likely to be extremely variable depending on the dose, route of administration, whether other medication is used at the same time, repeated doses and the individual animal.
- Any research into establishing excretion times in greyhounds is forbidden under UK animal welfare law.
- A particular problem exists with the use of long-acting or depot injections, which are designed to be active for several days or weeks, for example anabolic steroids and anti-inflammatories. A single injection can last for a surprisingly long time, as was shown by a nandrolone preparation lasting 100 days in some cases. Given that long-acting products are normally suspended in oil, and have their chemistry altered to prolong the duration of the effect, it is not surprising that they can persist for a long time.

The decision to administer such a preparation should be carefully considered as it may result in either positive drug tests or a prolonged lay-off time.

- For this reason it is good practice in racing animals to select the preparation with the shortest possible duration of action, and only if necessary, repeat the short-acting medicine. If veterinary surgeons treating racing greyhounds are not familiar with the NGRC requirements, then trainers are recommended to draw their attention to this advice note.
- All treatments must be entered in the Trainer's Treatment Book, and any Prescription Only Medicine must be detailed as to the preparation, dosage, route of administration and duration of treatment, signed and stamped by the treating veterinary surgeon. This routine event will help both trainer and veterinary surgeon to discuss the implications of selecting a depot preparation for a racing greyhound. As a matter of course, it is extremely important that the Trainers' Treatment Book is kept up to date and accurately records specific treatments.

(Originally published 15.6.07)