

# Canine contraceptive rolls out across Europe

European dog owners and vets can now reversibly block fertility in male dogs for six months. Suprelorin, a biocompatible contraceptive implant made by Australian manufacturer Peptech Animal Health is being rolled out across Europe by French company Virbac. Peptech is investigating the launch of the product in other markets.

Suprelorin's active ingredient is the synthetic hormone deslorelin, a strong gonadotrophin releasing hormone (GnRH) agonist, which binds to GnRH receptors in the brain. When stimulated, the receptors become desensitized to GnRH, due to the continuous release of deslorelin. This halts gonadotrophin FSH and LH production, which in turn blocks testosterone and sperm production.

Whatever the weight of the dog, an implant the size of a microchip is placed between the shoulder blades by a subcutaneous injection. The procedure is much easier than surgical castration, and does not require anesthesia. Infertility becomes effective six weeks after the first implantation and lasts for a minimum of six months. The procedure can then be repeated for the longer-term control of fertility. If the treatment is not repeated, fertility will be restored in 98% of dogs within 18 months of the implantation. Implants do not need to be removed after the active ingredient has been used since the matrix dissolves in the body over time.

The product not only reversibly induces infertility, but also lowers libido and will

therefore reduce anti-social behavior due to high libido, says the manufacturer. It allows vets to test whether testosterone is at the root of a dog's behavioral problems and whether castration is the right solution.

Suprelorin has been approved for marketing in Australia since December 2004 and in New Zealand since September 2005. A 12-month version was launched by Peptech in Australia in January 2007. Last summer, Suprelorin was registered in Europe through a centralized procedure.

Peptech reached an agreement with Virbac for the French company to distribute the implant to the European market (*Animal Pharm* No 622, p5). The packs sold to vets include one injector and two needles, each preloaded with one implant.

Olivier Elfassy, Virbac's European Marketing Director, told *Animal Pharm* that Suprelorin was an excellent addition to the company's pet reproduction range. The company already markets Alizine (aglepristone), an antiprogesterin to induce abortion in dogs.

Last year, following a centralized registration, it launched Ypozan (osaterone acetate) in Europe, a steroidal anti-androgen indicated for prostate hyperplasia in dogs. Suprelorin was first presented to European vets at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress in April this year. Since then it has been launched in Germany, Holland, Italy and in France this month. It should reach most European markets by September 2008.



Suprelorin advertising

The attitude to canine castration is very culture-dependent, Mr Elfassy continues. In Northern European countries such as the UK or Germany, some four-fifths of dogs are castrated. In the southern countries, such as Spain and Italy, as well as in France, the rate is as low as 10%-12%. The company's marketing strategies and product potential may therefore be quite different from one country to another, he explains.

"We are presently preparing a registration document for the 12-month version of Suprelorin in Europe in conjunction with Virbac," Dr Paul Schober, Peptech's managing director revealed to *Animal Pharm*.

Regarding other markets, he said: "Our preference is to start registration in the US with a marketing partner already in place. We are well advanced in the selection process. We have also been approached by several companies to take the product into Asia, so are now looking to select a marketing partner there as well. We expect that

Asia will be an excellent market for Suprelorin."

Research with the product is being carried out on female dogs, in many other species and for various other indications. "We have preliminary results that show the product is effective in bitches, and in cats of both sexes, but more work is needed before we can register the product for these indications," Dr Schober said.

The biocompatible implant delivery system, for which Peptech has worldwide patent protection, may also have wider potential. "We are looking at different molecules for different applications but we are not in a position to discuss this at present," he indicated.

Peptech Animal Health Limited was a wholly owned subsidiary of Peptech Limited. Late last year, Peptech Limited merged with Evogenix and changed its name to Arana Therapeutics. Arana sold Peptech Animal Health to Parma Corp in February this year, to focus on antibody therapeutics. ●