



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Pesticides and  
Veterinary Medicines Authority**

3 September 2020

Dr Julie Strous  
Australasian Veterinary Boards Council  
470 Collins Street, Melbourne  
Victoria 3000

**By email:** [ed@avbc.asn.au](mailto:ed@avbc.asn.au)

Dear Julie,

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has recently become aware of media reporting (*Black market cat drugs studied as COVID-19 treatment*, 31 August 2020, The Age), in relation to the unregistered compounds known as GS-441524 and GC376. These compounds, which are reportedly being used to treat cases of feline infectious peritonitis, are not approved for use by the APVMA. No manufacturing facilities are licenced by the APVMA to produce these compounds for use in animals.

Cat owners seeking unregistered products to treat their pets may result in unsafe or ineffective veterinary chemical products being supplied. This poses a risk to pets.

Registered veterinarians may apply for [consent to import](#) when they have examined an animal that is under their direct care and, as the treating veterinarian, considers the use of an unregistered veterinary product is indicated over the use of an available registered product. Veterinarians remain responsible for complying with the relevant laws in their State or Territory.

The APVMA is an administering authority for the consent to import, although other importation approvals may be required depending on the product. The appropriate form can be downloaded from the [APVMA website](#) and submitted via email to [enquiries@apvma.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@apvma.gov.au).

The unlawful importation of unregistered veterinary chemicals is an offence which can be subject to fines between \$1,998 and \$166,500, as well as civil or criminal penalties.

The APVMA works with a number of agencies and regulators, including the Australian Border Force, to detect importation of unregistered veterinary products. Where veterinarians commit suspected offences the APVMA will notify the appropriate Board and may take further enforcement action.

Further information about [importing](#) veterinary chemical products and the APVMA's [compliance](#) responsibilities is available on our website. Any enquiries about import consent for veterinary products can be directed to the APVMA Case Management and Administration Unit on +61 2 6770 2300 or [enquiries@apvma.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@apvma.gov.au).

I would appreciate your circulation of this advice amongst your membership to assist veterinary professionals in supporting compliance with Australia's agricultural and veterinary chemicals laws.

Yours sincerely,

Steven Harris  
Director, Compliance and Monitoring  
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority.