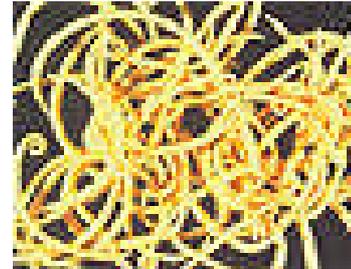


Worm infestations can cause varied symptoms, some of which can even lead to severe illness. Commonly encountered symptoms are colic, diarrhoea, weight loss, poor performance and even persistent coughing. The effectiveness of a worming program is dependant on a lot of factors, but can be checked by analysing dropping samples, and blood samples (for tapeworms). Worming programmes are based on the need to treat for different worms at different times of the year.

1. **Encysted cyathostomes** (small redworms)

The most common cause of worm burden in the horse. Once ingested, the worms remain dormant within the gut wall, affecting the absorption of food. More importantly in late winter/early spring there is a mass awakening of these worms as they emerge from the gut wall. This can cause severe illness, including possible mortality. They are treated with either Equest or a 5 day course of Panacur Guard. Treatment for the encysted worms are best in November and February. Routine grazing season wormer helps to keep the adult population down.



2. **Strongyles** (large redworm)

The larval stages of this worm migrates through the blood stream affecting many organs. More importantly the worms can affect the blood supply to the gut causing severe colic. The migrating larvae should be treated with Equest, a 5 day course of Panacur Guard or an Ivermectin based wormer, treat in Nov/Dec

3. **Tapeworms**



The actual levels of infestation in horses is much higher than previously realised. A new blood test can be used to accurately identify the level of burden. Faeces samples do not give an accurate representation due to the sporadic nature of the egg segments being released. Treatment is every 6 months, in March and September with either a DOUBLE DOSE of a Pyrantel wormer, or SINGLE dose of a Praziquantel / combination wormer.

4. **Bots**

Bot eggs are clearly seen on the horses' coat as small creamy eggs, 2mm long. Removal with a bot knife does help control levels, but worming once a year in December with either an Ivermectin wormer or Equest.

5. **Others.**

There are many other worms that can affect horses :- Pinworm, Large Roundworm, Hairworm, Stomach Worm, Intestinal Threadworm, Neck Threadworm and Lungworm. They can all be controlled with Ivermectin wormers as part of the annual worming programme.

It is also important to consider ***management of pastures*** :-

1. Livestock.

Worms that affect horses do not tend to survive in other hosts. Therefore when ingested by cattle and sheep the larvae are killed and the lifecycle which would normally result in more eggs on the pasture is stopped. This is a natural method of 'Vacuuming' a pasture clean.

2. Do not over-stock a field. Ideally a density of one to two horses per acre should be the maximum.

3. Poo-Picking

Reducing the amount of muck on a pasture will improve the quality and amount of grazing available to the horses. It will also significantly reduce the level of worm eggs on the pasture. It is important to pick up the muck at least twice a week during the grazing season and at least once a week at winter to have any affect of the worm burden. Obviously the more frequent the cleaning of the pasture the better. This is especially important if the pasture is 'over-stocked'.

3. Harrowing

Harrowing is only beneficial in Summer when the muck has hardened and the dry heat will kill larvae/eggs. In winter months all that will happen is the infective larvae will be spread over the pasture increasing the horses worm burden.

Important Worming Management

1. Do not under-estimate your horses weight.
 2. Worm all new arrivals before letting out in the paddock
 3. Worm all horses at the same time, with the same wormer.
 4. Treat at least annually for the encysted small redworms
- Treat pregnant mares before and after foaling.

Monitoring.

Faecal Worm Egg Count – can only give an indication of the adult stages of redworms (cyathostomes and strongyles) and large roundworm (Parascaris). It does not show levels of encysted or migrating larvae.

Tapeworm Antibody test (blood sample) – Measures the horses immune response to a significant tapeworm burden.

Worming Programme :-

A worming programme will vary depending on the risks and the management. A closed, small population of horses will require a different worming strategy from a large livery yard with many new arrivals with unknown worming histories. A small yard that cleans the paddocks on a daily basis will need to worm its horses less frequently than an over-stocked field that is never cleaned. Therefore it is always important to discuss your requirements with your veterinary surgeon.

Different classes of anthelmintics (wormers)

Ivermectin – Furexel, Eqvalan, Panomec, Noromectin, Vectin, Eraquell

Ivermectin + Praziquantel - Equimax, Eqvalan Duo

Praziquantel - Equitape (NO NEED TO DOUBLE DOSE)

Pyrantel - Pyratape P, Strongid P