

Horse Parasite Control

Strategic Deworming

The practice of treating all horses every six weeks with rotational dewormers is no longer recommended. Previous deworming practices have allowed resistant worm populations to grow. It is now imperative to practice strategic deworming. Research has shown that 80% of the worm burden on your pasture is likely from just 20% of your horses¹. Your horses are all different and must be treated differently. Deworming every horse year round is like mowing your lawn every week, all winter long! Did you know it is actually the larval stages of worms that cause the most damage to your horse? The goal of deworming should be to prevent contamination of the environment with infective eggs and larvae, not just to kill adult worms in your horse. Now that you know about parasite resistance, what can you do? Clinicians at UT Veterinary Medical Center, have developed a strategic deworming protocol for your horses. This program will contribute to healthy horses and a well-managed farm.

1. Determine If Resistance Is Present

A recent survey showed that in the southeast >95% of large herds (>24 horses) had small strongyle resistance to fenbendazole and nearly 50% had resistance to pyrantel pamoate². A Fecal Egg Reduction Count Test (FERCT) can be done to determine if you have resistant worms on your farm. This test involves running fecal egg counts before deworming and 14 to 21 days after. This test allows an appropriate dewormer to be selected for your horses.

2. Classify Your Horses

Horses are classified as high, medium, or low shedders based on the fecal egg count tests (FEC). This test will be done 6-8 weeks after your last deworming with Oxibendazole/Fenbendazole or Pyrantel; 12 weeks after Ivermectin; and 16 weeks after Moxidectin or before implementing a strategic deworming protocol. It is a simple test on your horses' manure samples. Ideally the FEC test should be run in September for horses living in the Southeast region of the U.S.

3. Deworm Based on Classification³

	LOW Shedder less than 200 eggs/gram feces	MEDIUM Shedder 200-500 eggs/gram feces	HIGH Shedder more than 500 eggs/gram feces
SEPTEMBER	Ivermectin Praziquantel	Ivermectin Praziquantel	Ivermectin Praziquantel
NOVEMBER	—————	Oxibendazole and pyrantel	Oxibendazole and pyrantel
DECEMBER	—————	—————	Moxidectin
MARCH	Moxidectin Praziquantel	Moxidectin Praziquantel	Moxidectin Praziquantel

Seasonal Deworming (see chart above). Deworming is not necessary during a typical hot summer season in the southeast US. 43- 85 degrees Fahrenheit is the temperature range that strongyle eggs hatch. During hot and dry summer months, eggs are not active and hatching.

The Big Picture:

Is strategic deworming worth the extra effort? Please consider:

1. Resistant worms are a growing problem
2. Many horses are being over-treated with medication
3. You can treat less often and achieve better results
4. During certain times of the year it is not necessary to deworm
5. Your horses will be healthier overall

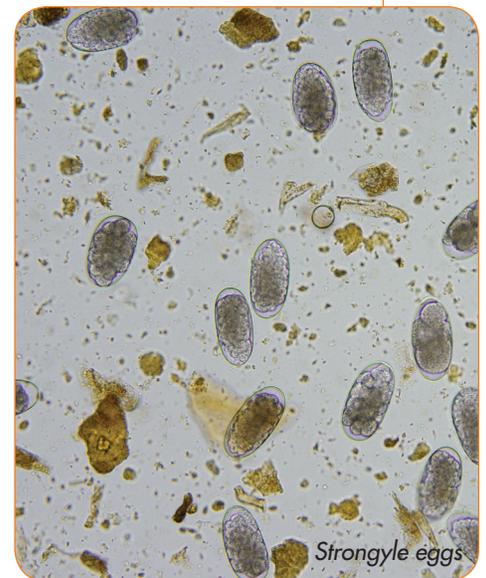
Research now shows that horses should not be dewormed year round with rotational dewormers.

A new protocol exists! Deworm less often, and improve your horses' health & farm management

Fecal tests are quick, simple & they can be run at a veterinary office or diagnostic laboratory.

Place manure samples collected from your horses in labeled plastic bags.

If needed, samples can be stored in a refrigerator for several days.



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1. Gomez HH, Georgi JR. Equine helminth infections: control by selective chemotherapy. *Equine Vet J* 1991; 23:198-200
2. Kaplan RM, Klei TR, Lyons ET, et al. Prevalence of anthelmintic resistance cyathostomes on horse farms. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2004;154:39-41
3. Reinemeyer, CR. Controlling strongyle parasites of horses: a mandate for change. *AAEP Proceedings* 2009; Vol 55:352-360