

Worming Your Horse

Despite many years of research, countless products and tools available to manage equine parasite burdens. Vets and owners all over the world continue see problems associated with horses with worms.

There are several types of equine parasitic worm that require management

- Small strongyles (Cyathostomes/Red Worm **MOST PATHOGENIC**)
- Large strongyles
- Parascaris equorum (usually affects younger horses)
- Pin worms (Oxycuris equi causes irritation to skin near anus)
- Tapeworms

As part of a worming strategy there are several simple management factors that decrease the chances of your horse picking up infectious worm eggs;

- Good pasture management
- Not overstocking
- Rotating pasture if possible
- Harrowing paddocks to break up fecal balls
- Co-grazing with other species (sheep are ideal)
- Removing droppings from paddocks **TWICE WEEKLY MINIMUM**

Resistance is growing problem with the current drug therapies that are used to treat problematic worm burdens in equines. The older advice of dosing and moving to clean pasture has encouraged resistance **DO NOT DO THIS.**

Each yard scenario and even individual horses worming requirements are different and so each case should be discussed carefully with a vet who can provide you with an effective protocol.

An important question that must be addressed is; **does the horse require worming treatment?** The current thinking is that a healthy horse should have a small population of worms as attempting to eradicate all worms has led to the development of resistance.

Therefore **WORM EGG COUNTS** are required for horses at pasture. This is obtained form a fecal sample that can be dropped off at the practice for laboratory analysis. Once the number of worms is determined then our vets can advise on an appropriate wormer.

However we do advise a treatment with a product containing moxidectin or a five day course of fenbendazole for the treatment of encysted larvae. This is because larval stages of Cyathostomes can emerge en mass in the early spring and can cause serious disease.

For any further questions regarding equine worming regimes please contact one of our vets.