

Barn Equine Surgery Targeted Worming

Worm resistance is becoming increasingly common amongst wormers available, therefore, we have updated our guidance for testing and usage of wormers. Currently Faecal Worm Egg Counts (FWECs) are used to identify horses with high worm burdens. Unfortunately, these tests cannot reliably detect Encysted Cyathostomins (Redworms) or Tapeworms. With recent developments we can now offer blood tests to identify horses with high parasite burdens. This is key to protect our winter wormers (Moxidectin and Praziquantel) as we are seeing increased resistance developing to these products. Treatment for Pinworm and Bots will depend on clinical signs and we don't recommend routine worming for these parasites. Our new protocol is outlined below. We recommend FWECs in March, June and September, followed by a blood test in September or October. **If no blood tests are conducted in the Autumn all horses should receive an Equest Pramox in November / December (after the first frost).**

	Tapeworm	Strongyles Ascarids	Encysted Redworms
January			
February			
March		FWEC	
April			
May			
June		FWEC	
July			
August			
September	Serum (blood) ELISA and worm if positive.	FWEC	Serum (blood) ELISA and worm if positive.
October			
November	OR Equest Pramox if no blood tests (after first frost)		OR Equest Pramox if no blood tests (after first frost)
December			

This approach is only appropriate if the following conditions are met:

1. All horses currently grazing the pasture participate.
2. The pasture has a low larval/egg worm burden (all horses grazing the pasture over the previous 12 months have been effectively wormed).
3. Droppings are collected from the pasture.
4. New horses are wormed and isolated for 48 hours before turn-out.
5. Dung sample, faecal worm egg count (FWEC) each horse.

Information for clients

Why test for worms?

It is often thought that only a few horses within the population are responsible for carrying most of the worm burden and these may include older horses, young horses that haven't developed natural immunity or immunosuppressed individuals. This is important for worm control as we can target those horses that require the wormer. We are seeing widespread resistance to the wormers we have available and there are no new products being developed, therefore, it is essential we preserve the efficacy of the current products. Many of the worms we see are only killed by one or two products so if we lose the efficacy of these wormers then we will be in a very challenging situation. Worms are a problem as they can cause weight loss, lethargy and diarrhoea but can be life threatening in cases of colic.

How we test for worm burdens?

Faecal Worm Egg Counts (FWECS) are currently used to assess worm burdens. Dung samples are assessed for the eggs the parasites shed, however, cannot detect all the parasites seen in equines e.g. tapeworms. The current policy of three monthly FWECS and worming in the autumn for tapeworm and encysted cyathostomins is effective, however, we are still unnecessarily using wormers. New tests have been developed to assess for tapeworm antibodies produced by infected horses and can either be assessed from serum (blood) or saliva. A similar test has been developed for encysted cyathostomins however is currently only possible from blood. We have updated our worming advice to include these new tests.

Adopting a strategic worming policy is essential to preserve the limited wormers we currently have and requires an integrated strategy of testing and yard management.

How to keep your pasture worm free

Stocking density: One horse per acre minimum.

Poo picking: At least twice per week.

Don't spread manure back on the pasture: Manure needs to be composted for 6 weeks minimum at a temperature of >50°C.

Separate dung heaps from fields: Tapeworms can spread between pastured via their intermediate host the Oribatid mite.

Quarantine new horses for 3 days in a box and treat with Praziquantel + Moxidectin (Equest Pramox)

