



Woodland View Equine Service

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Deworming Strategies

Due to the ongoing development of small strongyle resistance to the benzimidazoles and pyrantel and of roundworms to Ivermectin and moxidectin, the old deworming schedule of treating horses every 2-3 months whether they need it or not must stop. No new anthelmintics (deworming products) are being developed so the products we have must be used more strategically. This involves treating the right horses with the right product at the right time.

Current Recommendations

- 1). Deworm pregnant mares 1 month prior to their due date. Ask your veterinarian for his recommendation on what product to use.
- 2). Do not deworm foals until they are 2 months old and then use pyrantel (Strongid) or a benzimidazole like Panacur, Safeguard or Anthelcide. Horses less than 1 year of age are very susceptible to roundworms. The above products are the most effective against roundworms generally.
- 3). Run fecal egg counts on adult horses to determine if they are mild, moderate or heavy shedders.
- 4). 20% of horses have FEC (fecal egg counts) less than 200 EPG (eggs per gram) are considered mild shedders and require twice yearly deworming. 60% of the horses have FEC between 200 and 500 EPG and are considered moderate shedders and require 3 times per year deworming. 20% of the horses have FEC over 500 EPG and are considered heavy shedders and require 4 times a year deworming.
- 5). Run a FEC the day you deworm and 10-14 days later. If there is not a 90% reduction in the egg count then you have a resistance problem with the product that you used and you should not use that product on your farm again.
- 6). Deworm around Dec 1 for tapeworms and bots. Pregnant mares can be safely dewormed with Equimax or Quest Plus. Other horses over 6 months of age can be dewormed with Quest Plus according to their weight. Start deworming foals at 2 months of age.

7). Do not deworm adult horses during the winter as strongyle eggs are not developing into infective larval stages. This is a general rule and there may be exceptions to the rule depending on the age of the animal and his previous deworming history.

8). The time that the egg count is suppressed after deworming varies with the class of drug used. The benzimidazoles and pyrantel is 4 weeks. Ivermectin is 8 weeks. Moxidectin (Quest) is 12 weeks. This period is called the egg reappearance period (ERP). Do not deworm prior to the ERP. For example if you use Quest do not deworm with another dewormer in less than 12 weeks. You are wasting your money and helping to create worm resistance.

9). The main parasite in adult horses is small strongyles or cyanthosomes. They are transmitted by eating grass. If horses are stabled or on dry lot they are not getting infected with worms.

10). Run a fecal egg count on any new additions to the herd to assess their parasite status and keep them off the pasture until you get the results of the FEC and the animal is treated accordingly.

11). Small strongyles have the ability to become encysted in the gut wall and remain dormant. When the weather is conducive to their survival the larvae will break out of the gut wall. This can lead to a round of colic or diarrhea. Only 2 dewormers are effective against the encysted stage and they are Quest (a single dose) and Panacur or Safeguard (a five consecutive day course). The encysted larvae do not show up on a fecal egg count.

12). Ask your veterinarian for help to determine what products to use on which horses and at what time.

13). If we do not become more responsible with our deworming strategies we will be left with no effective products.