



Confused about worming?

You have probably all heard rumours about resistance to wormers becoming more of a problem for your horse. Well this is true, and is a potentially serious problem. So what can we do about it? Do you find yourself dazed and confused when confronted with the shelf of worming products, all saying they are the "best"? How often should we worm and which wormer should we use?

Well read on.....

How often should I worm my horse?

Each horse has its own individual requirements, depending on the way it is kept and managed, and therefore a rigid worming protocol cannot be recommended. The latest advice is not to worm your horse unless you have to, as the more times a worm population is exposed to a specific wormer the more likely that resistance will develop. A sensible worming protocol involves only worming when required, using the recommended product at the correct time of year.

So does your horse have worms?

The best way to tell this is to do a worm egg count. This involves bringing a faecal sample (one ball is enough) to the surgery for analysis in our laboratory. The number of worm eggs in 1 gramme of faeces is calculated, which relates to the number of adult roundworms in your horse's gut. The results can be reported on the same day, along with any necessary advice regarding your horse's worming requirements.

When should a worm egg count be carried out?

With winter approaching it is important to do a worm egg count at the end of October/beginning of November. After this, a routine test is not required until early spring (February/March). The spring and summer are the worst months for worms, so we also advise testing in May and July.

What about tapeworms?

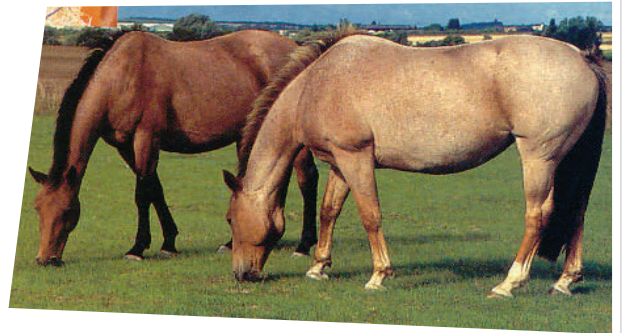
These are not detectable on worm egg count, but it can be assumed that if there is a low roundworm burden, then tapeworm levels should also be low. A blood test can be used for detection, if required. Twice-yearly treatment in the spring and autumn can be done using praziquantel (e.g. Equitape or the combined wormer, Equimax).

To rotate or not to rotate the wormer you use?

Previously we were all taught to rotate wormer groups from year to year in order to reduce resistance. However, resistance to some wormers is already quite high, especially to the benzimidazoles (e.g. Panacur). Mild resistance has also been reported to pyrantel (e.g. Strongid P / Pyratape P).

So what's left?

Basically, ivermectin (e.g. Eqvalan, Panomec, Evaquell, Furexel) moxidectin (e.g. Equest) and praziquantel for tapeworm (e.g. Equitape P.) Equimax contains ivermectin and praziquantel



Two more reasons for faecal testing for worms.

1. It is important not to allow a new horse onto your pasture if it is carrying resistant worms. Therefore, any new horse must be tested before allowing it onto your pasture and if it is found to have worms it should be treated appropriately. Two weeks after treatment a second worm egg count should be carried out to check that the wormer has worked.
2. Your horse should be tested for worms if it develops clinical signs of a worm problem, e.g. failure to "do well", weight loss, diarrhoea or constipation, bouts of colic, itchy rear end.

Seasonal Worming Guide

SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN	WINTER
Worm egg count	Worm egg count	Worm egg count	No need to worm egg count unless concerned.
If required, treat with ivermectin or moxidectin (+ praziquantel for tapeworm if required)	If required, treat with ivermectin or moxidectin	If required, treat with ivermectin or moxidectin (+ praziquantel for tapeworm if required)	Continue good pasture management.
e.g. Equimax	e.g. Panomec	e.g. Equimax	

Remember:

- **Performing a worm egg count will enable you to know when worming is required.**
- **Reduce contamination of the pasture by picking up the dung (twice-weekly in summer, once-weekly in winter), avoid overstocking and periodic "resting" of the pasture.**
- **Please phone us at the surgery (01491 651479) if you want to discuss this "can of worms" further !**