

Worming is a fundamental part of your horses preventative health care and a strategic “de-worming” plan should be in place for your horse. Some livery yards have protocols in place but if you are unsure, always contact your vet who will be more than happy to provide a suitable worming plan, designed specifically to your horses needs.

Horses that have large burdens of worms are at risk of developing problems such as colic, weight loss and diarrhoea. In severe cases, a high worm burden can prove fatal. While horses of any age can suffer from worm infestation, it is usually the young and old that are most susceptible.

Resistance to wormers

This is when the wormer administered, is no longer effective at reducing worm numbers in the horse.

Just like improper antibiotic treatment in humans causing resistance; continued frequent use of wormer treatments is leading to wormer resistance in horses.

Every time we deworm a horse, the potential for resistant worms increases.

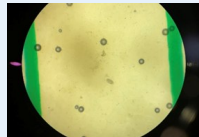
With this in mind, we now more than ever, need to ensure a strategic worming plan is in place rather than just blanket worming.

Minimizing the worm burden

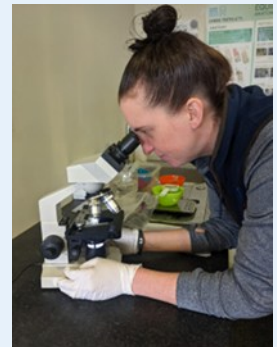
There are a number of way to reduce the risk of a worm burden occurring:

- Pick up droppings in the paddock at least twice a week.
- Rotate paddocks for rest periods.
- Don't overstock paddocks.
- Quarantine new horses coming to the yard, test and treat them for worms as advised by your vet.

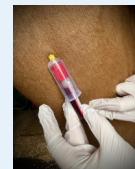
There are three main groups of worms which we need to consider when constructing a worming programme: redworm (small and large strongyles), roundworm (ascarids) and tapeworm. Less clinically significant, but not to be forgotten about are pinworm and bots.



Round worms - We test for round worms every 12 weeks (Spring, Summer, Autumn) by using a faecal worm egg count test which is performed by your veterinary practice. This is when a small amount of dung is examined under a microscope to detect any worm eggs as shown above. Depending on the number of eggs present, will determine if worming treatment is required. In some cases, we will then repeat the test 14 days after the wormer has been administered to ensure it has completed it job, reducing the worm egg count effectively (faecal egg count reduction test).



Red worm - Testing for red worm through a blood test allows for an accurate reading of the red worm burden (if any), ensuring that only horses that actually require treatment, receive a specific wormer to target red worms. The blood test is taken by the vet with results available within a few days.



Tape worm - Testing for tapeworm can be done through a blood test or saliva test. It is straight forward and again, allows for minimal and effective worming over the winter months rather than blanket worming, helping to reduce the chance of resistance developing.

Available Worming Products

There are many de-worming products available making it tricky to know what to use and when. Deciding on which wormer to use can be a difficult choice! As such we recommend that you contact your vet or SQP to discuss your horses' worming needs.