

The Latest on Equine Deworming Recommendations

The goals of a parasite control program are to (1) minimize worm burdens and (2) decrease the rate at which parasites are developing resistance. To accomplish these goals, there have been some recent changes to the recommendations for controlling equine parasites. Questions like, are we deworming too often? Are we creating resistant populations of internal parasites? Is that dewormer you just used doing any good? These questions are being asked as researchers are finding more and more parasite resistance to the dewormers we use and the way we use them.

Here are some guidelines to help you better understand the latest recommendations. These guidelines are based on the targeted or strategic deworming plan as opposed to the old rotational method. This plan determines the amount of Strongyle eggs (both large and small) in a particular amount of fecal material.

-Begin with a fecal egg count (FEC). This tells you if your horse is a high shedder (over 500 eggs per gram), medium shedder (200-500 eggs per gram), or low shedder (fewer than 200 eggs per gram).

-Deworm high and medium shedders 4 times per year (quarterly). Deworm low shedders two times per year.

- Ideally FEC's should be done minimally once per year to make sure that a horse's egg shedding status has not changed, however more frequent FEC's may be necessary in certain situations.

-Use a broad spectrum product as your basis for control such as: Spring - Moxidectin with Praziquantal, Summer - Ivermectin, Fall - Moxidectin with Praziquantal, Winter - Ivermectin

-Make sure you are administering the correct dosage for your horse's weight obtained by a weight tape or scale.

Determination for deworming schedules should always be done after a FEC was performed and should be done on a case by case basis due to environmental factors as well as research indicating that each horse may have a different burden. Contact your veterinarian to devise a deworming plan that best suits your horse's needs.