

# TARGETED WORMING

## Worming advice is changing!

Traditionally wormers were given at frequent intervals throughout the year to prevent disease due to a worm burden. We are now recommending a risk based, diagnostic-led worming programme, rather than regular worming throughout the year as standard, this is due to the increasing evidence of resistance to the current wormers that are available.

Resistance is a growing threat. This is because, just like antibiotics, worms are developing resistance to the drugs that we use to kill them. This is due to a number of factors, however worming when it is not required is considered the prime reason. It is commonly thought only 20% of horses have worms but over 80% are still being wormed.

### Wormer Resistance

Targeted deworming strategies are now recommended to keep the resistance to available wormers to a minimum. With only five worming chemicals licensed to treat parasites in horses in the UK, resistance means untreatable parasite burdens and there are currently no new treatments on the horizon!



Wormer resistance occurs when a wormer no longer effectively controls the worm population. Once resistance has been established in a worm population, the health, and welfare of horses are at risk.

Resistance develops due to the small genetic variations that occur within a worm population which lead to some worms naturally being more resistant to chemical wormers than others. Therefore, when a horse is treated with a wormer all of the worms which haven't evolved with this advantage (susceptible worms) are killed, leaving only the worms which are resistant. These resistant worms then pass on their resistance, creating a wormer resistant population. This is an example of natural selection.

### Targeted worming -Risk Assessment based

A worm risk assessment, together with regular worm egg counts and tapeworm saliva tests, is the most effective way to determine if and when, a horse needs to be treated for worms. This is known as a risk-based, diagnostic-led approach to worming.

An annual worm risk assessment helps to ascertain whether your horse needs to be given a routine treatment for encysted small redworm larvae in the winter. It also enables us to monitor your horse over time and to provide advice about a suitable worming program and other things you can do to help minimize your horse's worm burden.



## Recommended Worming program (FWEC -\* Faecal worm egg count)

Our recommended policy on parasite control is as follows:

- From 6 months old - \*FWEC every 12-14 weeks, typically performed during the grazing season (March-October) however all year round is now advised, this is to identify whether your horse needs to be wormed by measuring the number of redworm eggs that the horse is passing in its manure and therefore being deposited on grazed pasture.
- Tapeworm saliva test is preferably biannually, during spring and autumn, however spring is the preferred time.
- Based on the RA a serum blood test during Autumn/Winter, for the presence of encysted small redworm.
- Treat parasites as transmissible disease, quarantine and test new horses appropriately.
- If a wormer is advised - Weigh your horse, pony or donkey and provide the correct dose.

Foals and Young stock (under 5 years old) require specific worming program and should be discussed with the Veterinary Surgeon.



## Reduction Testing

- If Treatment is advised, undertake a reduction FWEC/Saliva test to monitor wormer efficacy, 10-14 days after treatment, Tapeworm - 12 weeks after .

Both Tapeworm and Small Red worm elisa tests/antibody test determine whether you need to treat your horse for either of these parasites, neither of which can be identified using a faecal worm egg count.

## What does the Worm Risk Assessment involve?

- In most horses the risk assessment is advised to be done annually. The ideal time is at the same time that you carry out the tapeworm saliva test, although it can be done at any time of the year.
- You will need to answer some questions on a form which you can get from reception or downloaded/completed on our website and the form sent in to your Vet.
- The risk assessment will provide a score that can be used to decide whether the horse needs treating with a wormer or not, and whether/how the risk of worm infection can be reduced.
- If the risk assessment score is moderate-high, then your Vet or SQP will discuss other things that can be done (other than treating with wormers) to reduce the risk of your horse picking up large numbers of worms, and to reduce the risk of wormer resistance developing or increasing.
- The results of the risk assessment will be discussed to you by your Veterinary Surgeon or Suitably Qualified personnel

## Management of environment

- Remove Manure from pasture at least twice weekly, preferably every couple of days.
- Avoid overcrowding of paddocks
- Rotate grazing with sheep or cattle or rest pastures regularly
- Muck heaps should be separated from grazing areas
- Avoid harrowing
- Where possible graze horses of similar age together - young horses are more susceptible
- New horses should be dewormed and quarantined for a minimum of three days after de-worming.

