

Equine worming protocol

In order to conserve our current efficient equine wormers we need to act responsibly. **ALWAYS USE THE CORRECT DOSEAGE.** If in doubt get a weigh tape.

There are currently 3 basic classes of equine wormers for treatment of Roundworms.

1 – Benzimidazoles or ‘white drenches’ e.g. Panacur, Telmin

2 – Pyrantel – Strongid P or Pyratape

3 – Avermectins – e.g. Eqvalan, Panomec, Vectin, Noromectin Also includes Equest (Moxidectin)

NO SINGLE CLASS TREATS THE RISKS FROM ALL ROUNDWORMS/ TAPEWORMS & BOTS. However Equest praemox combines moxidectin for roundworm treatment+ bot +inhibited cyathostomes along with Praziquantel to treat tapeworms.

Each product has a different interdosing interval.

In a group of horses all kept under the same management there will be those individuals that are very susceptible to worms and those that are inherently resistant. By taking regular faeces samples of individual horses an owners vet can build up a picture of the relative sensitivity to worms for each horse. This knowledge can allow a longer interdosing interval for some horses thereby prolonging the effectiveness of the wormers and limiting resistance. Young horses less than 4 years of age are relatively susceptible to worms and so require more worming. Aged horses or those that are sickly have poorer immunity and so harbour more worms which produce a greater level of pasture contamination.

Where horses grazing together are owned by different people it is essential that all parties treat their horses together as a grazing group and with the same wormer/group.

If faeces can be removed from pastures twice weekly then the pasture worm burden is reduced twenty fold!

Appropriate harrowing of pastures in **dry weather** breaks up the faeces and allows them to dry up thereby killing the worm larvae. In hot weather worm larvae are hyperactive and use up energy resources much quicker. If done in wet weather the harrowing process distributes the worm larvae from the roughs to the lawns and increases the risk to the horse!

Essentially use one wormer group per grazing season. However as we need to treat certain worm types on a strategic basis e.g. Tapeworms in late April and late September, Bots in winter, so we have to compromise this ideal. Eradication is not possible, we aim for control and to minimise clinical disease as a result of these parasites.

Basic programme, (Ideal for youngstock)

Year 1 Equest every 13 weeks (or Ivermectin product every 10 weeks) with Equitape given in late April and late September to control Tapeworms (or substitute Equest Praemox but not for foals). **NB – Equest not to be used in foals (use Strongid-P for foals)**

Year 2

Panacur type given every 8 weeks. With a 5 day course in late March and early December to control encysted stages. Also a Double dose of Strongid P or Pyratape P given in late April and late September to control Tapeworms. When giving these tapeworm doses as these products also control Roundworms they can be substituted for a Panacur dose. Bots need to be controlled by a separate product in late December e.g. Eqvalan.

Year 3

Strongid P or Pyratape P every 6 weeks with a Double dose of Strongid P or Pyratape P given in late April and late September to control Tapeworms. With a 5 day course of Panacur in late March and early December to control encysted stages. Bots need to be controlled by a separate product in late December e.g. Eqvalan.

Other considerations

If horses are housed overwinter and have no access to grazing then they cannot pick up any worms. Hence no further treatments are needed until the spring about 3-5 weeks after turnout.

As above if pasture faeces removal is practised then worm egg counts are likely to allow less frequent wormer dosing because of this extra information for your vet.

Mixed grazing with cattle or sheep will help limit the pasture worm burden as they eat the equine worms which ends the life cycle. i.e. They act as biological worm Hoovers!

There is only one species of roundworm common to Cattle, Sheep & Horses and currently it is not thought to be a risk to horses.

Mixed grazing therefore reduces the risk to the horse and so can extend interdosing intervals. **Monitor by worm egg counts during the grazing season remembering that each grazing season is subtly different.**

There is no point using worm egg counts (WEC) to monitor infection levels for tapeworms but a blood test is available. Inhibited worms do not lay eggs so WEC are useless to monitor Larval Cyathostomyiasis. Do not take a sample immediately after worming. Taking one at the time of worming and about 2 weeks later can check for wormer resistance. A golf ball sized lump is ok. Please keep cool as eggs which hatch between collection and laboratory analysis will mean a falsely low egg count. Try to keep below 10-15 degrees C.

Remember Foals & Yearlings are more susceptible due to lower natural resistance so must be treated more aggressively.