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## DEWORMING PROGRAMS

There are several treatment options for deworming programs that are effective for minimizing parasites in horses. None of these options replace good pasture and feed management. Consistent management and adequate cleaning of stalls and paddocks helps to minimize the ingestion of parasite eggs. Simple management practices that help reduce parasite load include:

- Rotating pastures so that grass height is not below 2-3 inches
- Regular cleaning of stalls and paddocks to minimize manure in feeding areas
- Feeding in buckets and mangers rather than directly on the ground
- Performing fecal egg counts to target the parasites your horse has acquired
- Using de-worming products to eliminate adults and larva in the horse's GI tract
- De-worming 2 days prior to moving horses to new pasture

### Adult Horses

A deworming program should be tailored to the individual farm to maximize the effect of the drug and to minimize cost of treatment. **Many parasitologists currently believe that most horses are over-treated for parasites, particularly during winter months and on well-managed farms.** There are reports warning that parasites have the ability to develop resistance to certain de-worming medications due to constant use of particular wormers. Performing a fecal egg count prior to de-worming will give a good indication as to what products and how often your horse will require de-wormed.

### Daily Program Deworming:

- A. Feeding products like *Strongid®* (pyrantel tartrate) daily minimizes the ability for parasites to develop into adults in the GI tract
- B. The daily products at their normal doses are not effective against bots, tapeworms, pin worms or encysted (inactive larva) strongyles, so other products must be given to control these parasites
- C. The typical daily deworming program is as follows:
  - 1) Daily feeding of pyrantel tartrate (*Strongid C2X®*)
  - 2) Annual dose of ivermectin with or without praziquantel (*Eqvalan®, Equimax®, Promecterin®, Rotectin I®*) or moxidectin with or without praziquantel (*Quest Plus®*) after the first hard frost (October/November) to control bots.
  - 3) Annual dose of moxidectin (*Quest® or Quest Plus®*) in late winter to control encysted strongyles.
- D. Daily deworming has shown benefit in reducing pasture contamination and controlling adult parasites. The manufacturer of *Strongid C2X®* has a health care program that provides health insurance for colic surgery free of charge for horse owners feeding their product and following a fixed health program protocol. Our clinic has information about the *PreventiCare* program for interested horse owners.

### **Annual Rotation Deworming:**

- A. This program involves using the same dewormer periodically throughout the year, then switching to a different product the following year to minimize the risk of parasite resistance.
- B. Ivermectin with or without praziquantel (*Eqvalan®*, *Equimax®*, *Promecterin®*, *Rotectin I®*) or moxidectin with or without praziquantel (*Quest or Quest Plus®*) work well in these programs, with ivermectin given 3-4 times per year, and moxidectin given 2-3 times per year. The frequency of deworming can be determined by performing fecal egg counts prior to treatment.
- C. The benefit of this program is that it is easy to remember and relatively inexpensive.

### **Seasonal Rotation Deworming:**

- A. This program involves using a different dewormer depending on the season of the year to target particular parasites. A typical season rotation would be:
  - 1) Late winter (February/March) - Moxidectin (*Quest Plus®*)
  - 2) Early summer (May/June) - Pyrantel poamate (*Strongid Paste®*, *RotectinII®*) to treat adult strongyles.
  - 3) Late summer (July/August) - (*Strongid Paste®*, *RotectinII®*) to treat strongyles and tapeworms.
  - 4) Late autumn (October/November) - ivermectin with or without praziquantel (*Eqvalan®*, *Equimax®*, *Promecterin®*, *Rotectin I®*) to treat strongyles and bots.
- B. The benefit to this program is its broad spectrum of treatment.
- C. This program is probably more expensive than annual rotation deworming, is more complicated to remember, and some veterinarians believe it may induce parasite resistance if used for many years. Again, fecal egg counts would be useful to determine if the program for your horse needs to be this aggressive.

### **Pregnant Mares**

All three programs are good for pregnant mares. **Pregnant mares should be treated with ivermectin with or without praziquantel (*Eqvalan®*, *Equimax®*, *Promecterin®*, *Rotectin I®*) or moxidectin with or without praziquantel (*Quest or Quest Plus®*) within 2 weeks (2 days optimal) of foaling to minimize parasites in the foal.**

### **Foals**

Foals are susceptible to round worms and should be treated differently than adults until they are yearlings. Severe colic in weanlings due to round worm impaction is not uncommon in our area, and prevention begins when foals are one month old. A good foal program is:

- 1) Pyrantel poamate (*Strongid Paste®*, *RotectinII®*) monthly beginning at 1 month old until 3 months old.
- 2) Rotate between pyrantel poamate (*Strongid Paste®*, *RotectinII®*) and ivermectin (*Eqvalan®*, *Promecterin®*, *Rotectin I®*) every 60 days until 1 year old.

The programs listed here are only suggestions and your horse may require a more or less aggressive program. **Please contact our office about our lab performing fecal egg counts to help you decide on a program.**