Deworming & Fecal Egg Counts



A fecal egg count (FEC) is required to determine how many parasite eggs a horse is shedding, and therefore how often the horse should be dewormed in a year. An FEC consists of collecting 2-3 fresh fecal balls and examining them under a microscope. A deworming program can save money and allow the use of less dewormer.

When to perform a FEC:

- At least once yearly for every horse on the farm before deworming
- Testing new horses before introducing to pasture
- Testing the efficacy of a deworming product with high shedders

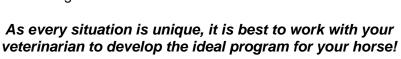
3 categories based on amount of parasite eggs being shed:

- 1. A "low shedder" has 200 eggs per gram (EPG) or less
 - Typically needs to be dewormed *twice* a year (spring and fall)
 - I. Spring ivermectin or moxidectin (Quest)
 - II. <u>Fall</u> (after the first frost) ivermectin with praziquantel (Equimax) or moxidectin with praziquantel (Quest Plus)
- 2. A "moderate shedder" has 200-500 EPG
 - Typically needs to be dewormed 3-4 times a year
 - I. Spring ivermectin or moxidectin (Quest)
 - II. <u>Late Summer</u> pyrantel pamoate (Strongid paste) or fenbendazole (Panacur)
 - III. <u>Fall</u> (after the first frost) ivermectin with praziquantel (Equimax) or moxidectin with praziquantel (Quest Plus)
- 3. A "high shedder" has >500 EPG
 - Typically needs to be dewormed 4-6 times a year (potentially every 2 months)
 - I. <u>Spring</u> ivermectin or moxidectin (Quest)
 - II. <u>Late Summer</u> pyrantel pamoate (Strongid paste) or fenbendazole (Panacur)
 - III. <u>Fall</u> (after the first frost) ivermectin with praziquantel (Equimax) or moxidectin with praziquantel (Quest Plus)
 - IV. Winter pyrantal pamoate (Strongid paste) or fenbendazole (Panacur)
 - V. A reduction count performed 2 weeks after deworming is recommended for horses with greater than 1000 eggs per gram

Additional information:

- 1. Horses should be dewormed based on an accurate weight estimate with a weight tape. This is especially important for very large or very small horses/foals to avoid under- or overdosing; bigger horses may need more than one tube.
- 2. All horses should be dewormed for tapeworms at least once per year (praziquantel). The most ideal time to do this is in late fall, after a frost.
- 3. Once per year, all horses should be treated for encysted small strongyles. This requires a Panacur PowerPac or Quest / Quest Plus.
- 4. To deworm for bots, we recommend using an ivermectin or moxidectin product in the fall.

5. We recommend using original name-brand products. Unfortunately, some generic (and low-cost) products have been shown to have less than the needed amount of active drug compound; therefore there is no real cost saving and you can be contributing to resistance.





Deworming Protocol Guidelines

Recommendations:

- 1. Pasture management:
 - a. Rotate pastures
 - b. Remove manure frequently
 - c. Harrow/drag pastures in hot weather and keep horses off the pasture for 2 months
 - d. Avoid overstocking pastures

2. Testing the efficacy of a deworming product:

- a. Fecal egg count reduction test the worm egg count should decrease 90% when a fecal egg count is repeated 14 days after a deworming product is used
 - i. Recommended on horses who have 1000 eggs per gram or more

3. Performing a fecal egg count:

- a. To provide the greatest information about an individual horse's parasite load, it is important to know when the horse was last dewormed and with which product.
 - i. For moxidectin (Quest products) it must be <u>16 weeks</u> or more since the horse was dewormed to perform a fecal egg count
 - ii. For ivermectin (Zimectrin or Equimax products) it must be <u>12 weeks</u> or more since the horse was dewormed to perform a fecal egg count
 - iii. For fenbendazole (Panacur) or pyrantel (Strongid) it must be <u>9 weeks</u> or more since the horse was dewormed to perform a fecal egg count

Caution: Do not allow any dogs to lick up dewormer that is dropped by your horse.

Mare and Foal Deworming



Recommendations:

- 1. Pregnant Mares:
 - a. Deworm as usual for beginning of pregnancy, but when the last set of pre-foaling vaccines are administered at 4-6 weeks pre-foaling, please deworm with a product containing ivermectin with praziquantel (Equimax) or moxidectin with praziquantel (Quest Plus)
- 2. Foal Schedule: *important to dose by weight, especially when using Quest/Quest Plus
 - a. 2 months of age fenbendazole (double dose of Panacur or SafeGuard)
 - b. 4-5 months of age pyrantel pamoate (Strongid)
 - c. 6 months of age moxidectin with praziquantel (Quest Plus)- dose based off of weight. Do NOT overdose.
 - d. 8-9 months of age fenbendazole (double dose of Panacur or SafeGuard)
 - e. 10 months of age ivermectin
 - f. 12 months of age pyrantel pamoate (Strongid)
- 3. Once a year old, recommend deworming at least every 4 months. At 2 years of age, you may deworm based on shedding status.