**Parasite Control in Horses**

Courtesy of:

**Cotati Large Animal Hospital**

8079 Gravenstein Hwy, Cotati, CA 94931

(707) 795-4356

[cotatila@att.net](mailto:cotatila@att.net|) |www.cotatilargeanimal.com

Gene Harlan, DVM| Calvin Dotti, DVM| Sally Venable, DVM| Emelie Roche, DVM

Hannah Jasperse, DVM| Kelsie Kennicutt, DVM| Hannah Case, DVM

Today we see resistance to many dewormers currently available for use in horses due to their improper use over time. Although deworming horses at regular intervals is easy and convenient, we now have the tools to target parasites in the horse more effectively and to keep levels low in the herd using less dewormers. Horses vary in their susceptibility to internal parasites and therefore should be treated as individuals when it comes to parasite control.

It is important to first do a fecal exam on your horse before thinking about which dewormer to select. By performing a fecal floatation test, you will know the type of parasites and quantity. We recommend checking a fecal at least twice a year. More frequent tests may be needed if horses have a heavy parasite load, or to determine if the drug selection was effective for your animals. This determination is usually performed with a repeat fecal floatation 2 weeks after the dewormer was given, and is often referred to as a Fecal Egg Count Reduction Test (FECRT).

In addition, manure and pasture handling is just as important to parasite control as deworming medication. Parasite eggs and larvae are deposited into the pasture through the manure. The parasites then grow and move onto the ground where the horse is foraging. Breaking the parasite lifecycle is accomplished by frequently picking up manure and composting it. Feeding off the ground in a tub or manger is also key to management.

**Foals**: Due to decreased parasite immunity, foals and weanlings should be wormed *carefully* and regularly until adults.

**According to recent American Association of Equine Practioners (AAEP) guidelines**

* Perform fecal egg count reduction tests to ensure that you are using effective dewormers in every herd or barn.
* Continue using fecal egg counts once or twice per year to categorize horses into low, medium and high shedders
* Deworm all horses at a baseline rate (yearly) and target selected horses more often based on fecal egg counts.
* Discontinue deworming all horses with fixed intervals year-round and stop blindly rotating anthelmintic classes.

**Types of Equine Dewormers**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | *Tapeworms* | *Small strongyles* | *Large strongyles* | *Roundworms* | *Pinworms* | *Bots* |
| Quest Plus | yes | yes | yes | yes | yes | yes |
| Panacur | no | yes | yes | yes | yes | no |
| Strongid | no | yes | yes | yes | yes | no |
| Equimax | no | yes | yes | yes | yes | no |
| Ivermectin | yes | yes | yes | yes | yes | yes |