

Horse Worming Myths Unravalled

- How often should I treat my horse?
- What product should I use and when?
- What else can I do to reduce the risk to my horse?
- Worm egg counts are a waste of money (?!)

Inadequate worming treatment of young and other groups of vulnerable horses leaves them at high risk of infection and disease.

Excessive use of wormers in horses that do not need to be treated is contributing to the resistance of worms to the drugs.

Not treating horses or treating them at the wrong time of year or with an inappropriate product leads to a greater risk of colic. Different internal parasites can cause different types of colic. As well as the risk of colic, high levels of worms can result in ill thrift, weight loss and damage to the gut wall. Certain management factors greatly assist in keeping the worm burden on your pasture as low as possible.

- Remove all droppings from the pasture on a regular basis, preferably daily
- Do not use the dung for fertilising the pastures
- Maintain a low stocking density
- Allow all fields sufficient rest time when they are not grazed

Co-grazing horses with other species such as sheep or cattle is also of benefit as the worm eggs ingested by the cattle or sheep will not become infective to horses.

Worm egg counts are highly beneficial, both to your horse and your pocket! As at only £9.50 they are cheaper than most routine wormers (for more than 1 sample from the same yard the price decreases further). They also avoid unnecessary drug treatments for your horse and help reduce resistance to those drugs.

The worm egg counts are simple to do and you will have the results back the same day. A small amount of fresh dung is required from each horse to be assessed and this is looked at under the microscope.

Depending on the result your horse may require treatment with an appropriate wormer; free veterinary advice will always be given with the results.

We recommend worm egg counts are carried out in April, July and October. Of course if you are concerned about your horse we can do a worm egg count at any time of year.

As tapeworm eggs are not detectable in worm egg counts a blood test can be used in the autumn to monitor the effectiveness of previous treatments against tapeworm. This can be done for £27.50 when included with other work.

We recommend all foals are treated against worms from 6 weeks of age with Strongid-P, this should be repeated monthly until they are 6 months old. Then they require treatment with Equest Pramox. There is a general annual programme available for adult horses with no previous problems with worms.

If you would like an annual plan specifically designed for your horse or yard please contact us for details.