

Best Practice in Environmental Strongyle Worm Management

A Seasonal Guide for Horse Managers

Relevant for healthy, adult horses from the age of 3 years

Gear up for SPRING

With an increase in temperature and good moisture, pasture grass will grow quickly. These are the best conditions for Strongyles to begin laying eggs. So, about a month into Spring...

- undertake a faecal egg count (FEC) for each horse and record these measurements for your future reference
 - **LOW (0 – 100 EPG)** – No treatment necessary.
 - **MODERATE (> 100 <200 EPG)** – No treatment, FEC monitor in 4-6 weeks or after warm, moist weather.
 - **MODERATE-HIGH (>200 <500 EPG)** – treatment advisable, monitor with additional FEC at end of efficacy period (according to manufacturer's statement).
 - **HIGH (>500 EPG)** – High-egg shedder. Treatment necessary. Continue to monitor these horses.
- **always treat HIGH egg-shedding horses with a targeted treatment (read the label) and monitor with FECs.**

Exercise restraint in SUMMER

In summer, *non-resistant* worms will try to survive hot, dry pasture conditions so only use deworming chemicals at this time if absolutely necessary. We need these worms to help keep the population of *resistant* worms at low levels.

- continue to monitor high egg-shedding horses with FECs every 8 weeks or so, but **BEFORE** any treatment (otherwise the result might be false)
- About 4-6 weeks after significant summer rain, it is useful to undertake FECs for all horses (keep an eye on the grass – is it growing?)

Treat other parasites in (late) AUTUMN

In late autumn the weather is cooling off and is less attractive for Strongyles to be laying eggs. But this is the best time to treat horses for other parasites such as bot fly larvae and tapeworm. Treatment at this time is also the time where there is minimal impact on our precious dung beetles.

- use a product with *Praziquantel* for treatment of tapeworm. Dewormers often identify this ingredient by using 'Plus' in the label. Ivermectin/abamectin will target bots.
- continue to monitor and treat high egg-shedding horses.

**HORSES THAT HAVE A TRACK RECORD OF NO, OR LOW EGG TEST RESULTS
GENERALLY ONLY NEED DEWORMING ONCE A YEAR – THIS IS THE TIME TO DO IT!**

Have a break in WINTER

In most parts of Australia, the weather cools sufficiently for this to be a time of low Strongyle egg production, but our winters are seldom cold enough or long enough to seriously deplete eggs that winter-over in the pasture. The main job at this time is to

- treat for bots and tapeworm if you didn't get around to doing this in late autumn

OTHER TIPS...

Become a **Worm Weather Tragic**:

- When the grass is growing, the worms will be laying eggs so, after warm, moist conditions (yes, these can even occur in winter) be FEC-vigilant!
- In the tropics – your FEC-ing regime will be governed by the wet and dry seasons,

AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY: always integrate FECs with good pasture hygiene/horse husbandry strategies.



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