

Legal Guidance for Livery Yard Owners on Purchasing Wormers and Coordinating Parasite Control for the Horses in their Care.

Yard parasite control works best when one person coordinates a programme and the horses can be managed at herd level, rather than as individuals. This should be based on worm egg counts and tests, to inform if any treatments are recommended. But what are the legalities around livery yard managers providing and administering wormers to their clients' horses?

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) is the UK body for regulating and enforcing the authorisation, manufacture, distribution of veterinary medicines, including worming treatments. They are responsible for ensuring they are safe, effective, and high-quality, protecting public health, animal health, and the environment.

The VMD have provided this helpful clarification of the regulations:

The general policy we have for the livery owner and their clients is that a livery yard owner can purchase wormers on behalf of the horses liveried with them, provided certain conditions are met:

- There is a written agreement between the yard owner and each horse owner that states that the horse owner agrees that the yard owner acts on their behalf regarding worming;
- The livery owner provides all relevant information on each horse to the retailer so that the retailer can prescribe and supply appropriately; and
- The livery owner only charges for the wormer in the cost of the livery (i.e. it's added to the general costs rather than charging individually for them and it isn't at a profit).

For the prescriber (vet, pharmacist, or SQP), the usual obligations apply:

- They must have sufficient knowledge of the horses they are prescribing for, including food chain status.
- They must have sufficient information on each horse that allows them to prescribe or supply appropriately and be satisfied it is the right product.
- They cannot supply a bulk quantity to the yard owner without the knowledge mentioned above.
- They cannot delegate these duties to the yard owner.

Effective parasite control on livery yards relies on coordinated decision making, evidence based testing, and clear lines of responsibility. While yard managers can play

a valuable role in organising worming programmes at herd level, this must be underpinned by written agreements with horse owners and strict adherence to prescribing regulations. Prescribers retain full professional responsibility for product selection and supply and cannot delegate these duties.

By understanding and working within the legal framework, yard managers, horse owners, and prescribers can collaborate to deliver parasite control programmes that are practical, compliant, and better for long term equine health.



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