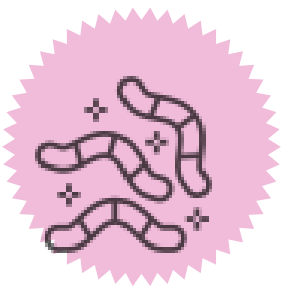


back to basics #8 Worming & Parasites

The importance of implementing an appropriate worming programme for your yard should not be underestimated. Parasitic worms can affect the health and well-being of equines of all ages.



Understanding the Risk

Knowing which equines may be more vulnerable

There are a range of worms and internal parasites that can affect equines seasonally or year round. Certain equines will be more prone to burdens and their effects. This includes youngstock, pregnant mares, ill or elderly equines. Herd numbers, and yard movements can also affect the risk or spread of infestation.



Dealing with Poo

Prevention through pasture management

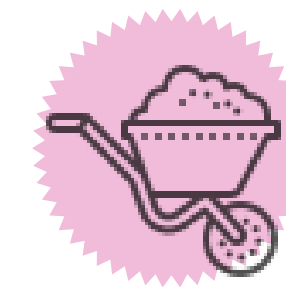
The average 16hh horse produces around 18kg of manure each day. That's a lot of poo for a herd that may be out 24/7! Poo picking is one of the easiest ways to prevent against horses picking up the eggs of worms. Ideally, paddocks should be cleared 2-3 times a week. In addition, ensuring that paddocks are not overgrazed or overstocked will reduce the need for equines to graze near droppings. Adopting good biosecurity practices can also help protect against parasitic infestations.



Understanding Wormer Resistance

Blanket worming is not the best option

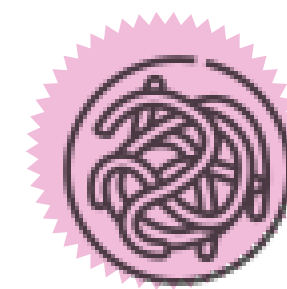
Despite many brands available, all equine wormers in the UK are made up from just five active ingredients. Reliance on them has come at a cost; worms are evolving to become resistant to the drugs available. Testing for the right parasite at the right time of year and, where a wormer is required, selecting carefully and resistance testing to check it's been effective can often give the best results than a blanket dosing program for all the yard.



Muck Heap Planning

Planning is key

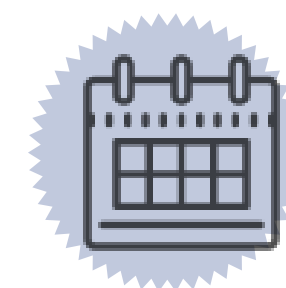
Appropriate positioning and management of your muck heap will help to protect the health of your horses and the land. Muck heaps should be positioned suitably for ease of use and maintenance, to help them rot down quickly, and to lower pollution risks. Muck heaps should be situated more than 10m away from water courses, and not close to hedges as the effluent can affect their growth. They should not be placed in paddocks with grazing horses, nor pose a nuisance to neighbours or public rights of way. Another alternative is to tip your muck straight into a trailer for easy disposal.



Using Faecal Egg Counts

The better option for worm control

Faecal Worm Egg Counts (FWEC) should be used as the first tool in managing worms. A FWEC can reduce unnecessary use of anthelmintic drugs. This simple and low-cost procedure tests a small amount of poo for worms, and can identify horses that may have a high enough result to warrant the use of deworming products. A count of less than 200 epg is a LOW count, between 200 and 1200 epg is a MEDIUM count, 1200+ epg is a HIGH count. A healthy adult horse should be able to follow a simple testing and dosing programme. An SQP is best placed to advise you on the process, or following test results.



A Basic Worming Programme

The following programme is a good basis for a healthy adult horse:

SPRING	FWEC for redworm and ascarids	Saliva Test for Tapeworm
SUMMER	FWEC for redworm and ascarids	
AUTUMN	FWEC for redworm and ascarids	Saliva Test for Tapeworm
WINTER	Treat or test for the possibility of encysted small redworm, depending on risk	

You can find more advice on the CANTER website for calculating your horse's parasite infection risk and the factors that influence this