PETERSON & SMITH Equine Hospital
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VET NOTES

April 2008

Previous VET NOTES

- March 2008 - The use of Oxytocin in the post-partum mare
- January 2008 - Preparing your mares for the breeding season
- January 2008 - Proximal hind limb suspensory desmitis: (PSD): Part II: Treatment
- December 2007 - Pleuropneumonia - when shipping fever turns into a nightmare
- November 2007 - Proximal hind limb suspensory desmitis (PSD): Part I: Diagnosis
- August 2007 - Intramuscular injections
- June 2007 - A hard pill to swallow
- April 2007 - The advantages of high fat/low carb diets
- March 2007 - Bandaging
- February 2007 - Single screw compression V. Screws and wire (Transphyseal bridging)
- January 2007 - The dental health of young performance horses
- December 2006 - Neonatal Isoerythrolysis in foals
- November 2006 - Upper respiratory infections of young Thoroughbreds in training
- October 2006 - Eastern equine encephalitis–time to vaccinate!!

Current parasite control recommendations

Over the years, the methods of parasite control in horses have changed drastically. Tube worming is no longer a common treatment, and clients are often left to stand in a feed store with numerous products in front of them. We currently have several classes of effective anthelmintics (dewormers) available. However new research is showing a scary trend of resistance beginning to develop with some of these products. Even more concerning is the fact that there are no "new" dewormers currently in the works. This means we as veterinarians and horse owners need to maximize effectiveness and minimize resistance with the products we already have.

So, how do we do this? We need to get out of the habit of deworming every 6-8 weeks "whether the horse needs it or not", as well as rotating dewormers with no rhyme or reason. By monitoring levels of parasite loads and using dewormers in a strategic manner – based on life cycles, level of infection, and effectiveness, we can improve our horses' health as well as decreasing the development of resistance.

A useful tool in analyzing the need for deworming is the fecal egg count (FEC). This measures the number of eggs per gram (EPG) in the horse's manure. By measuring this, we can determine how heavy a parasite burden is, how effective a current deworming program is, and through serial samples, if resistance is developing to a particular product.

Another idea that we need to accept is that the goal of parasite control is not to completely eliminate parasites from the horse, but to keep these parasites at a subclinical level that does not negatively impact the horse's health.

Unfortunately, there is no "recipe" for deworming that will work for every horse or every farm. It is important to consult with your veterinar-

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ian to determine a parasite control plan that is best for your individual situation.

This is an example of one strategic deworming plan that could work well in Florida:

> Beginning in **October**, perform a fecal egg count on all horses, deworm all horses with ivermectin and praziquantel.
>
> In **December**, treat only horses shedding moderate to high levels of parasite eggs with oxibendazole or pyrantel, and perform a fecal egg count.
>
> Two weeks later, perform a fecal egg count on the treated horses to determine effectiveness.
>
> In **January**, perform a fecal egg count on all horses and deworm with moxidectin and praziquantel.
>
> In **April**, treat only moderate and high shedders with oxibendazole and pyrantel.

The reason no deworming is done from April through October in this plan is that the high summer temperatures kill parasite eggs that are shed before they can develop into infective larvae.

Initially, it may seem like more work and more money to develop a strategic deworming plan, but long term, you will be using fewer dewormers and have better overall health of your horses.

- September 2006 - Gastroscopy
- August 2006 - Rhodococcal pneumonia
- July 2006 - Managing limb deformities in foal with dynasplints
- June 2006 - Disaster preparedness
- May 2006 - Mare reproductive loss syndrome (MRLS)
- April 2006 - Exercise-induced pulmonary hemorrhage
- March 2006 - The use of high speed treadmill to diagnose upper respiratory tract disorders
- February 2006 - Common medications used to assist breeding, cycle regulation and pregnancy maintenance of the mare
- January 2006 - Managing high risk pregnancies

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