

# Stanley House Veterinary Group Equine Worming

Our new equine worming program has been updated in line with modern advice and takes a proactive approach to worming your horse, whilst minimising the overuse of worming medications. Testing by taking worm egg counts (for roundworm) and saliva samples (for tapeworm) is a simple and effective way to determine whether your horse requires any worming treatment. By treating only when necessary, we reduce the risk of wormer resistance developing and reduce contamination of the environment with drugs that can harm other animal species.

Groups of adult horses and ponies grazed on well managed pastures can follow our Easy Worming plan. It is recommended that horses that graze together are tested and treated as a group. Worm egg counts can be performed for you in house, or through a freepost service if you are unable to drop samples at our premises. The plan is also available at reduced cost through our Equine Health Plan.

It's easy to remember when to test. In each season of Spring, Summer and Autumn please submit a sample of droppings for testing. Then at the end of the grazing season it's time for worming. The optional saliva test will tell us whether tapeworm treatment is required or not. We then give a single treatment to target encysted redworm (which cannot currently be tested for) combined with a product that also treats for tapeworm if required.

## EASY WORMING PLAN

SEASON	TEST	TREATMENT
Spring	Faecal worm egg count	Only if necessary
Summer	Faecal worm egg count	Only if necessary
Autumn	Faecal worm egg count Optional tapeworm saliva test	Only if necessary
Late Autumn/Winter		Encysted redworm treatment Tapeworm treatment if necessary

## BEST PRACTICE

Pasture management is essential to managing worm burden. Whilst daily poo-picking is the ideal, even twice weekly will still make a big difference. Other strategies such as rotation of fields, mixed grazing with ruminants and harrowing during dry weather can help reduce the worm population too.

**When collecting a faecal sample for worm egg counting choose freshly passed droppings. Collect a few pinches from different places in the pile to get a good mixed sample, about a tennis ball's worth. Place the sample in a clean polythene bag and squeeze out the air as you seal it. Keep the sample cool and deliver it for testing within 24 hours to get a reliable result.**

The Equisal tapeworm test is also easy to perform, just follow the instructions in the pack or watch this video to show you how.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vj5KymkVeps>

If you do need to give your horse worming drugs then it is very important to dose for the correct body weight. Use an equine weigh tape to estimate the dose required and make sure none is spat out. Be sure to dispose of any leftover wormer carefully as it can be toxic to small animals or children.

If you have treated a horse with a high worm egg count or tapeworm score it is advisable to retest at a suitable interval, as recommended by your vet. This is to detect any problems with wormer resistance.

## SPECIAL CASES

In some cases it is especially important to contact your veterinary surgeon for tailored advice on a suitable worming program. This includes

- Those showing signs associated with a high worm burden, such as weight loss, colic or diarrhoea
- Animals that may not have been wormed for a very long time
- Foals and youngsters under 3 years old may require more frequent treatment
- Pregnant mares and those with foals at foot
- Donkeys and mules. A targeted program is still advised, but many wormers are not licensed
- Horses and ponies receiving mite injections

## NEW HORSES

The worming history of new horses should be checked and new horses kept isolated and not turned out until their worming status is known. Ideally a faecal worm egg count and tapeworm ELISA (blood or saliva test) should be performed to determine parasite burden. Alternatively a combined product such as an Ivermectin/Moxidectin + Praziquantel product can be given.

\*\*\* Please remember that all horses should be kept off pasture for a minimum of 24 hours after worming treatments, and especially avoid moving to 'clean' grazing after treatment \*\*\*

Your veterinary surgeon is the best person to give you advice on worming your animals. We are always happy to work together with livery yard and stud managers in developing a program that suits each unique situation. For further advice on worming and to discuss your horse's specific requirements please call on 01282 868 748.