Worming

When you offer a home to a Mare and Foal Sanctuary horse or pony, their worming programme must be kept up to date during the time they are in your care.

Is there a special worming programme I have to use?

In short, no. Many yards have a traditional worming programme using different types of wormers throughout the year to treat different types of worm. If your yard or livery centre has this type of worming programme in place they will probably insist that all horses on the premises are wormed according to it. This is perfectly acceptable. Similarly, if you are unsure of which programme to follow, your vet will be able to advise you and will probably even make you a tailored programme.

At the Mare and Foal Sanctuary we have started to use a different method of worming which has cut down considerably on the costs and the amount of chemicals we are administering to our horses. It has been developed with the help of specialist equine vets, and works very well, with the horse only being wormed as much as is necessary for that particular animal. It is explained below and you are welcome to use this programme.

Part of this worming programme is that grazing areas are poo-picked clear at least once a week (preferably twice) to help break the worm cycle.

Accuracy is important

It is very important when giving wormers that the correct dose is given; under-dosing can render the wormer ineffective and lead to worms becoming resistant to drugs.

Most people use a weight tape to measure their horse’s weight. However, this is not always the most accurate method and the larger the horse, the less accurate it tends to be. They almost always show a reading that is less than the horse actually weighs, and we have found with larger horses the difference can be almost 100 Kg. We now use a weighbridge to gain an accurate reading. When you collect a pony from us you will be given its last weighbridge reading, but this is obviously subject to change, especially if your new pony is a youngster.

The basic programme consists of doing a Worm Egg Count (WEC) twice a year, in summer and winter, and (as Tapeworm cannot be detected by doing a WEC) treating for Tapeworm at the normal times i.e. spring and autumn—see next page for timeline.

Contact us
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Timeline

Mid December            WEC sample
Mid March                  Treat for Tapeworm
Mid June                      WEC sample
Mid September          Treat for Tapeworm

Unless you have been advised otherwise, Tapeworm treatments should be alternated each year. For example:
Year 1 = Treat with Equimax
Year 2 = Treat with Equest Pramox

In winter and summer a WEC sample is taken and analysed. Your vet can do this, usually at a cost of approximately £15 depending on which practice you use. They will give you a small container (or you can use a clean freezer bag or similar) and you will need to collect a small amount of your horse’s faeces as a sample.

Your WEC result will be given as a number of eggs per gram (epg).

If your WEC is under 100 epg there is no need to worm your horse at the current time.
If your WEC is 100 – 200 epg then you will need to worm your horse.
If your WEC is above 200 epg you will need to worm your horse, and re-sample 4 - 8 weeks later, depending on the type of wormer you have used.

For Ivermectin: re-sample 4 weeks after worming.
For Moxidectin: re-sample 8 weeks after worming.

The 2 most effective types of wormer are Ivermectin based wormers (Eqvalan, Equimax, Eraquell, Vectin) and Moxidectin based wormers (Equest & Equest Pramox). There has been increased resistance to other types such as Pyrantel and Fenbendazole in recent years and therefore we do not recommend that they are used.