

Worming – Summer 2014

The mild winter and early spring we have experienced this year means that levels of worm eggs and larvae on the pasture will increase more rapidly throughout this seasons grazing season. This increases the risk of disease, especially in young horses.

Ideally a targeted approach to worming by monitoring levels of worm eggs in your horses faeces will help minimise infection and resistance on your yard.

We are now offering worm egg counts as one of our services at Gillivervet.

What is a worm egg count?

A worm egg count (WEC) is the number of eggs per gram (epg) of faeces.

What do the results mean?

A low count (less than 200 epg) – worming is unnecessary unless advised otherwise by your vet

A medium count (200-1200 epg) – worm with an appropriate wormer

A high count (more than 1200 epg) – discuss these results with a vet to plan a treatment course

The count will identify eggs from worms that lay eggs as part of the life cycle. This does not include tapeworms, pinworms, bots and encysted stages of red worm. Tapeworms should be targeted with an appropriate wormer during autumn/winter. Alternatively tapeworms can be detected via a simple blood test.

What do I need to do?

All you need to do is bring a clearly marked faecal sample into the practice with the horses name, your name and a contact telephone number on it. We will advise you on the next steps.

Is it expensive?

No, most people save money by using a targeted programme, especially in the long term. It will also help prevent resistance on your yard.

Also if you get your horses WEC done with us and your horse requires worming, if you purchase the wormer from us we will not charge you for the WEC procedure.

Is there anything else I should be doing?

Pasture management is a crucial part of strategic worming. This involves poo picking the fields at least twice a week.

New arrivals to a yard should be treated with an effective wormer and stabled separately for 2-3 days before turnout onto a clean pasture

Attempt to keep horses with the same grazing companions as much as possible and on the same worm programme

Ensure adequate grazing for the number of horses and include rest periods

Cross grazing with other species is beneficial (cattle and sheep)

If in any doubt please do not hesitate to call one of the vets for free advice.