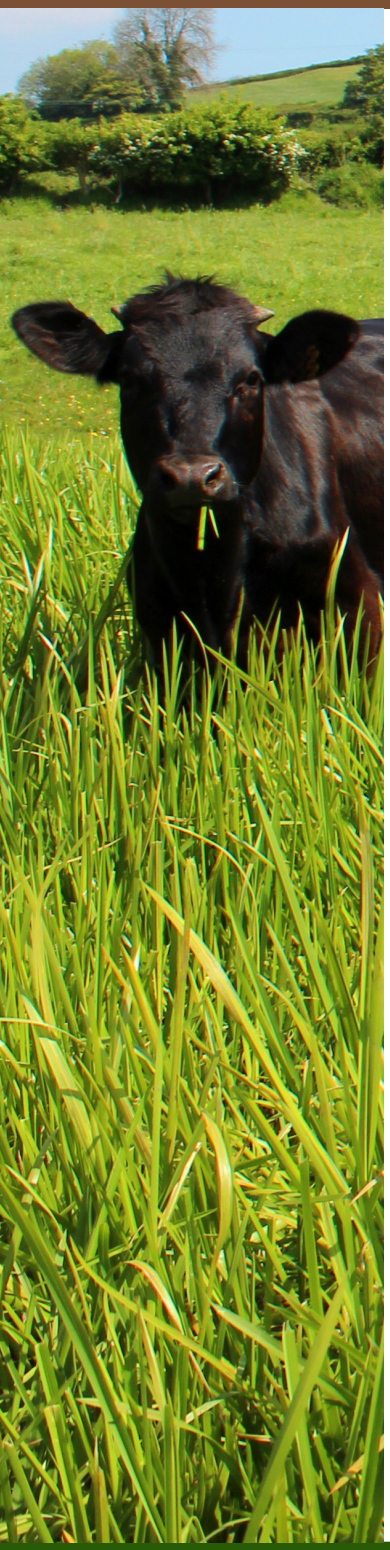
USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Illinois Grazing Manual Fact Sheet

ANIMAL HEALTH

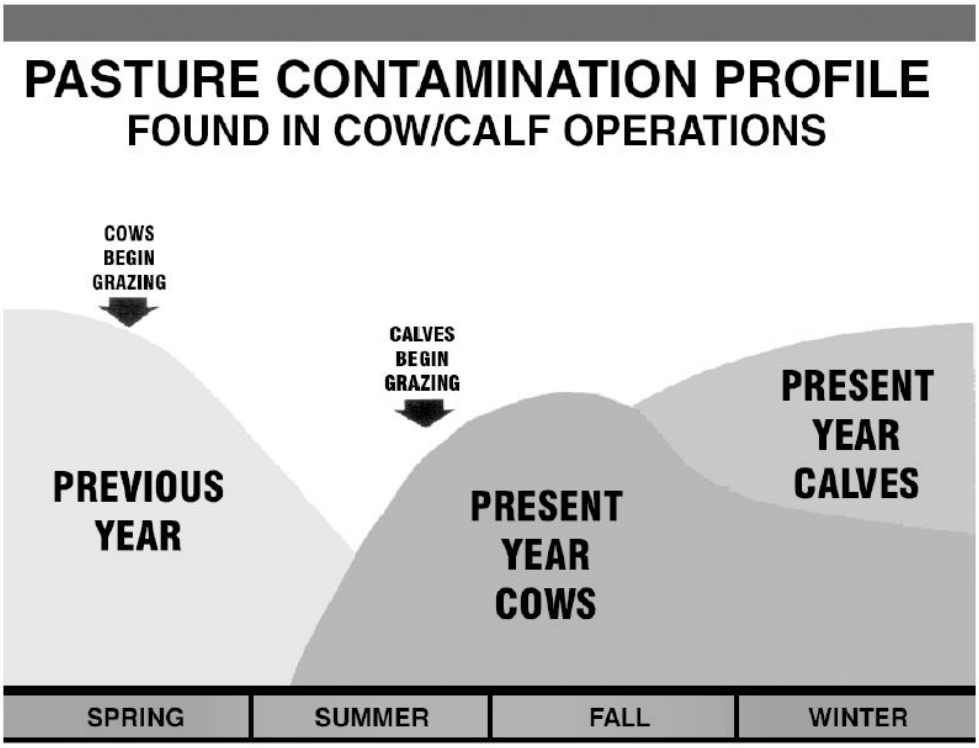
Control of Parasites in Grazing Beef Cattle



Unless in total confinement, cattle will be exposed to parasites that result in production loss and, perhaps, health problems. Control of internal parasites can be accomplished by administration of any of several oral, injectable or pour-on products available on the market. Too often the decision to deworm cattle is based on their appearance. By the time the effects of parasitism are visible, major economic loss and health compromises have occurred. The issue is when and how often to deworm cattle relative to the herd exposure and re-infection. Optimum parasite control for grazing cattle relies on strategic deworming in order to decrease re-infection. We must "treat" the pasture as well as the animal.

- Worm larvae survive winter and are infectious until late spring
- Warm, wet weather increases worm larvae viability
- Worm larvae populations from pastures in spring can be excessive and cause disease in cattle
- Ingested larvae mature to adult worms, produce eggs which pass out with the feces and further contaminate the pasture
- Ostertagia sp., specifically, has the ability to encyst in the wall of the abomasum to later flood the intestinal tract with a high larvae population
- Pasture reinfection from infected cows readily provides larvae for calves (which are less resistant to worm deleterious effects) as well as cows

Figure 1. Over-wintered parasitic larvae provide re-infection for cows put on spring pastures who perpetuate the pasture parasite contamination and provide exposure to new calves.**



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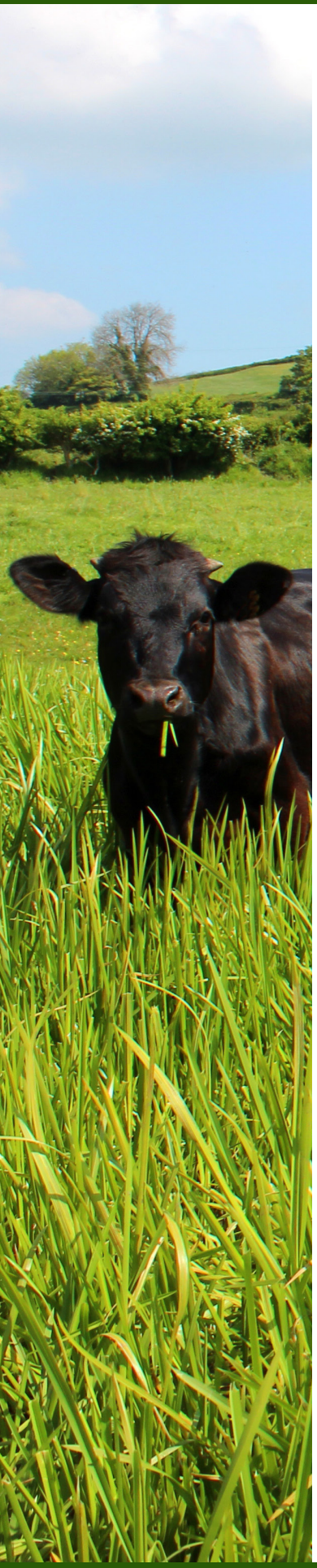

Goal is to maintain "parasite safe" pastures

- Kill adult worms before grazing
- Kill immature worms before egg shedding
- Time treatments to seasonal grazing pattern

Deworm cattle at the end of the grazing season to prevent carry-over of worms (worming after the first frost with some products will also kill external parasites)

Deworm cattle a few weeks after putting on pasture to kill newly acquired worms before they mature and begin laying eggs to reduce pasture recontamination

- A dewormer which can kill immature worms will be necessary to use at this time (one that kills only adults will not be effective)

Young animals are more susceptible to worm infections and should be treated three to four weeks after turnout followed by several repeat treatments three to four weeks apart

- (longer than four weeks can allow for sufficient maturation of the parasite to allow shedding of eggs)

Pasture contamination is related to grazing pressure

- Dragging pastures to break up and dry fecal pats reduces larvae numbers
- Intensive grazing practices intensifies the need for parasite control strategy

Contact your veterinarian

- Optimum product type for specific control period
- Strategies for dewormer administrations to coincide with other cattle handling requirements (e.g., vaccination, pregnancy examination, etc.)

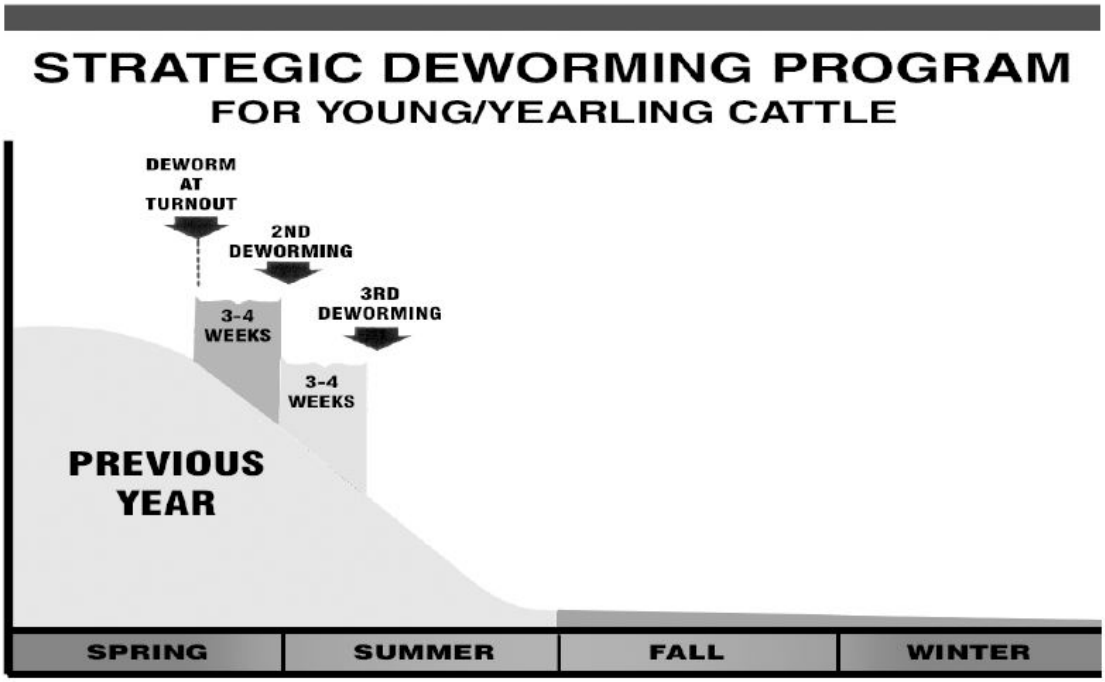

Figure 2. Deworm cattle before turning out to pasture and following treatments to avoid recontamination of pasture**

***Bliss DH: The Cattle Producer's handbook for Strategic Parasite Control. Hoechst Roussel Vet, 1997*

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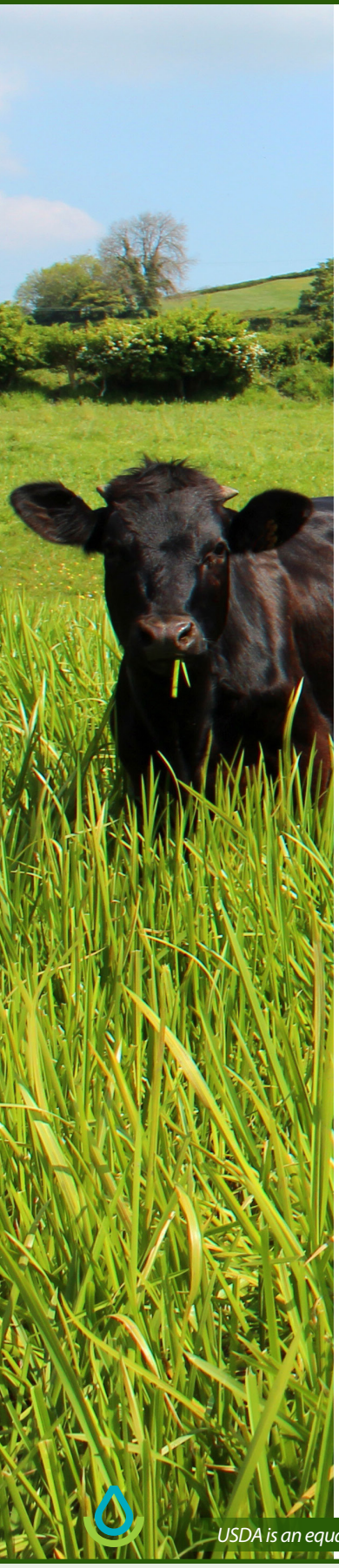

Additional Fact Sheets:

- Control of Equine Parasites — R.D. Scoggins, DVM, University of Illinois
- Control of Internal Parasites in Sheep — R.D. Scoggins, DVM, University of Illinois
- Control of Parasites in Dairy Cattle — Dick Wallace, DVM, MS, University of Illinois

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