

## Illinois Grazing Manual Fact Sheet

### ANIMAL HEALTH

# Control of Parasites in Equine

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### Administration:

How an anthelmintic is administered has little bearing on its effectiveness. IN GENERAL, as long as the following criteria are met, regardless of the route of administration (stomach tube, intra-oral, or mixed with feed), effective deworming should occur:

1. The correct amount of dewormer must be administered based on an accurate estimation of the horse's weight.
2. Dose consumption and/or retention must be complete.
3. The anthelmintic selected must be highly effective against the parasites infecting the horse.
4. The anthelmintic must be approved for use via the route of administration selected.

### Adults:

In most cases, six dewormings yearly aimed at strongyle control are the framework for a complete interval deworming program (table 1).

Bot infestation: Boticides should be administered at least two times per year. Once about one month after the first bot egg is noticed on the hair coat of horses, and once after the end of the botfly season.

### Foals:

Interval deworming programs for foals should include six dewormings at 2-month intervals beginning at 8 weeks of age. Routine anthelmintic therapy is begun at 8 weeks of age, because that is when immature and mature adult stages of *P. equorum* are commonly first present in the small intestine (table 2).

### Tapeworm Control:

Some beneficial control of tapeworms can be achieved with the manufacturer's recommended dosages of pyrantel pamoate (6.6 mg/kg). Better control can be achieved with double the label dosage of pyrantel pamoate (13.2 mg/kg). Benefit from treatment can be optimized by treating 2 weeks prior to and at the conclusion of the grazing season.

### Environmental Control:

Additional parasite control beyond that achieved by routine administration of anthelmintics may be obtained by implementing management practices that further decrease the number of infective stages of parasites in the environment. Management practices that enhance parasite control include the following:

1. Routine removal of feces from stalls, pastures, and paddocks.
2. Proper disposal of manure. Manure SHOULD NOT be spread on pastures unless it has been composted for over one year.
3. Regular rotation of pastures and avoidance of overstocking.

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4. Quarantine all new additions. Have fecal examinations conducted and use appropriate treatment with non-benzimidazole anthelmintics before intermingling with other horses.
5. Prevention of fecal contamination of feed and water.
6. Harrowing pastures during the driest and hottest season of the year.
7. Deworm all horses housed together at the same time.
8. Have fecal examinations performed regularly to evaluate parasite control (10-14 days following treatment).

**Table 1:** Example of an interval deworming program for adult horses in the North Central United States.

| Month     | Anthelmintic              | Efficacy           |
|-----------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| February  | Pyrantel pamoate          | Nematodes          |
| April     | Oxibendazole              | Nematodes          |
| May       | Fenbendazole & Piperazine | Nematodes          |
| July      | Ivermectin                | Nematodes and Bots |
| September | Pyrantel pamoate          | Nematodes          |
| November  | Ivermectin                | Nematodes and Bots |

**Table2:** Example of an interval deworming program for foals with an average birth date in February in the North Central United States.

| Age (Months) | Anthelmintic     | Efficacy         |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| 2            | Ivermectin       | Nematodes        |
| 4            | Oxibendazole     | Nematodes        |
| 6            | Pyrantel pamoate | Nematodes        |
| 8            | Ivermectin       | Nematodes & Bots |
| 10           | Pyrantel pamoate | Nematodes        |
| 12           | Ivermectin       | Nematodes & Bots |

**Table 3.** Example of a seasonal deworming program for adult horses in the North Central United States.

| Month    | Anthelmintic | Efficacy         |
|----------|--------------|------------------|
| May      | Ivermectin   | Nematodes        |
| July     | Ivermectin   | Nematodes & Bots |
| December | Ivermectin   | Nematodes & Bots |

### Additional Fact Sheets:

- Control of Parasites in Grazing Beef Cattle - G. L. Meerdink, 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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