



Attention all horse owners!

October 1st, 2008

Dear Deer Creek Equine Clients,

In an effort to provide the best possible care for you and your equine companions, we have thoroughly updated and revised our deworming recommendations. Based on recent research, our rotational deworming practices have created resistant parasites. These are parasites that are immune to or can't be killed with the dewormers we currently have on the market. We don't want to create even more of a panic, but the drug companies have no new products in research or development. Great for the parasites, not so great for horses!

The current recommendations are to increase fecal tests and decrease blind deworming (deworming without knowledge of whether a horse needs to be dewormed or not). At this point you are probably adding up the cost of fecal tests and wondering how you will afford it! At Deer Creek, we are committed to providing the best care for your horses while trying to remain sensitive to the cost of that care. With all that in mind, we tried to develop a plan that gives our clients the best care (i.e. lots of fecal exams) without overwhelming costs. Unfortunately, not one size will fit all. Each farm, client, horse, will need to be evaluated on a case by case basis with individual deworming recommendations made by the veterinarian.

To get started, we need a baseline fecal on your horse(s). The best time to test a fecal will depend on when you last dewormed your horse. If you recently dewormed and want to know if the dewormer was effective, we need a sample 10-14 days after the dewormer was given. If you dewormed over 2 weeks ago, we need to test after the egg re-emergent period or after the dewormer has stopped working. Every dewormer has a different duration of action, so you will need to know the generic drug name.

Benzimidazoles and pyrethroids work for about 4 weeks so we would wait another 2-4 weeks and test a fecal at that time.

Ivermectin works for about 8 weeks so we would test a fecal 10-12 weeks after deworming.

Moxidectin works for about 12 weeks so you would test at 14-16 weeks after deworming.

Based on the pre-deworming fecal, we will recommend testing a fecal 10-14 days after deworming (if we are worried about your horse's parasite load) to be sure the dewormer worked or just testing after the re-emergent period. The best time to deworm for tapeworms is after December 1st (after the first killing frost), so deworming with ivermectin or moxidectin and praziquantel at that time would be most effective. The next fecal check would be around March 15th. If that fecal exam is negative the next fecal exam would be 6 weeks later around May 1st. The next fecal exam would be around June 15th. All horses would be dewormed with moxidectin or ivermectin at that time.

With the summer temperatures in our area, most parasites are dormant. So the next fecal exam would be in September, around the 15th. If negative, test a fecal again around October 15th. Sometimes with the warm weather of the fall, the parasites may start to increase on the pastures and in the horse. This would necessitate a fall deworming. If the fecal exams are negative, then deworming can occur around December 1st.

After the first year, we will be able to decrease the number of fecal tests per year, thus saving you money. While the first year will be more expensive than just buying dewormers and blindly deworming your horse, the benefits to your horse will be priceless. If and when the day comes that the current dewormers are no longer effective, we will have no way to treat your horses for parasites. Find a veterinarian who has been in practice 30 years or more and ask them how they dealt with parasites back when they started in practice. Lots of horses died from parasite infestations or complications from parasite infestation.

All of this increase in fecal exams will be useless without pasture management and good horse keeping practices. Keeping your paddocks and pastures clean and free of manure, rotating pastures and resting them periodically will all help to decrease the parasite load on your farm. Your local agricultural extension agent can be very useful in this area.

For those of you breeding horses, you may want to know what the recommendations for foals or young horses (18 months or less) are. That group of horses has less resistance to parasites so they will need to be tested and dewormed more often. Starting with fecal exams at 2-3 months of age and deworming based on fecal results.

While this is a lot of information and may be overwhelming, we are here to answer questions and help you figure out what is best for your individual situation. Please call us, we are happy to help improve your horse's quality of life and help them live even longer!

Sincerely,

Drs. Arledge, Lenher and the entire staff at Deer Creek Equine Clinic