

Parasites of Importance

Strongyloides westeri (threadworms)

A parasite most commonly found in foals less than six months of age. *S. westeri* is passed in the mare's milk to the foal in the first few days of life. *S. westeri* is rarely a problem and should only be treated for if it has been shown to be a problem on the farm.

Oxyuris equi (pinworms)

Pinworms are small worms which are rarely a problem. Most deworming strategies will be effective against pinworms.

Anoplocephala perfoliata (tapeworms)

Tapeworms are not a common problem in horses; however they should be included in a deworming strategy. Praziquantal or double dose pyrantel is effective against tapeworms. For most farms once a year in the fall is sufficient to control tapeworms. Farms where tapeworms have been identified as a problem may need an additional treatment in the spring.

Cyathostomes (Small strongyles)

Cyathostomes are small worms found in the large intestine and cecum of horses. This is the primary target for treatment in adult horses. The larval stage of the cyathostome is the infective stage. Horses ingest larvae which encyst in the mucosa of the large intestine/cecum. This is the pathogenic stage of cyathostome infection. After the larvae have matured they migrate into the lumen of the intestine and become adults. The female adults shed eggs which pass in the feces. Once on the ground the eggs hatch and the process starts over. Most anthelmintics are only effective against the adult stage of cyathostomes. Anthelmintic resistance is common in cyathostomes.

Strongylus vulgaris (Large strongyle)

Prior to the introduction of modern anthelmintics, it was estimated 90% of colics were due to large strongyles. Most modern deworming protocols, including rotational deworming, were design to combat large strongyle infections. However, the efficacy of modern anthelmintics has markedly decreased the prevalence of this parasite. Colic due to *S. vulgaris* infection rarely if ever occurs in managed horses.