Worm Control Packages

ROSSDALES
VETERINARY SURGEONS

With increasing levels of resistance to anthelmintics ('wormers'), a targeted and responsible worming protocol is very important to protect your horse or pony against these internal parasites.

Rossdales now provides you with two options, our **Standard Worm Control** package and a new **Enhanced Worm Control** package, to make worming your horse as convenient and cost effective as possible, and to give you peace of mind.

Both the **Standard** and **Enhanced Worm Control** packages aim to prevent unnecessary treatments by using faecal worm egg counts (WECs) to regularly monitor for worms throughout the grazing season. In winter, an Equest Pramox wormer is provided with the **Standard Worm Control** package. This is suitable for the elimination of all the worm types and stages, providing effective treatment for small redworm (larvicidal), tapeworm, roundworm and bots.

The **Enhanced Worm Control** package replaces the Equest Pramox wormer with a blood sample*, which is taken during the late autumn/early winter to test for small redworm and tapeworm at our laboratory (ELISA testing). This package provides testing, analysis and feedback.

Based on your horse's blood test results, it may not be necessary to use a wormer at all, thus reducing the potential for anthelmintic resistance. If a particular type of worm is identified by the laboratory tests, your vet will recommend the most appropriate treatment to target the specific worm type found.

**Visit fee for taking blood is not included.*

The full details and costs for these packages are as follows:

	Standard	Enhanced
Information sheet and full set of instructions	✔	✔
4 x vouchers for faecal worm egg counts (WEC) at our laboratory (for use March to November)	✔	✔
4 x bags for collection of faecal samples	✔	✔
1 x wormer (Equest Pramox) for effective treatment of small redworm (larvicidal), tapeworm, roundworm and bots, once during the winter period (December to February)	✔	✘
1 x weigh tape	✔	✔
Personalised interpretation of the WEC results and advice about pasture management and deworming treatments, where appropriate	✔	✔
Small redworm ELISA test at our laboratory (November/ December)	✘	✔
Tapeworm ELISA test at our laboratory (November/ December)	✘	✔
Blood sample (excludes visit fee)	✘	✔
	£82	£140

Prices are inclusive of VAT

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Worming horses

There is no 'one plan fits all' for worming horses and ideally a plan should be tailored to suit a yard. However, this is not always easy, where horses come and go and management varies, so we have put together this guide to an initial plan, which should be used as a bare minimum.

Worm Egg Counts (WECs)

A critical part of worm control is regular dung removal from paddocks and, during the grazing season, carrying out WECs, which look at how many 'roundworm' eggs are in the faeces. This gives a good guide to how many roundworms are infecting the horse's intestines.

We recommend that a sample of each horse's faeces is submitted to our laboratory four times a year (from spring to late autumn/early winter). Samples are examined under the microscope and the worm eggs are counted. This allows us to determine what level of worm burden is present on the yard and which horses are most affected (**20% of horses on a yard are the 'high worm burden horses' carrying 80% of all the worms**). As the weather cools in late autumn and during winter, WECs are not required as the worms become less active and the horse's risk of infection is reduced until the weather warms up again in spring, when the worm lifecycle starts again.

A suitable faecal sample is about four nuggets of fresh dung taken from several different places in the pile and collected into a glove or freezer bag, which should be clearly labelled with the horse's name and the owner's name. Exclude as much air as possible from the bag, keep it cool and out of sunlight, and submit it to our laboratory the same day. If there is likely to be a delay the sample should be chilled (not frozen) until you can get it to the laboratory.

It is important that the horses are sampled separately rather than pooling samples. This way we can identify which horses are the high worm burden horses. If WECs are consistently high within a group of horses, it may be worth undertaking a **faecal worm egg count reduction test** (FWECRT), which means performing a further WEC two weeks after worming to see if the wormer has been effective. If it has not, the worms in those horses, and therefore the paddocks they graze, are probably resistant to that type of wormer.

Which horses need worming, and how much should you give?

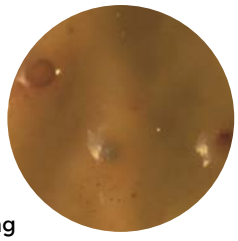
Horses with a **high WEC** should be wormed with a product recommended by us. It is important not to 'under-dose', as this can encourage resistance to develop, so always try to get an accurate bodyweight for the horse (a weighbridge is ideal, but a weigh tape is also effective), and **ADD at least 10% to the worming dose** to account for errors and losses. Horses with a **zero or low WEC** (i.e. below the treatment threshold determined by the laboratory) do not need worming. Healthy adult horses can cope with low levels of worms without being harmed and there is some evidence that low levels may even be beneficial to their health.

Tapeworms

Tapeworms do not show up reliably in WECs, but we can test for them in our laboratory with a blood sample. The Tapeworm ELISA test looks for antibodies against the tapeworms, rather than eggs of the tapeworms themselves. The tapeworm lifecycle relies on a pasture mite that spreads the tapeworm across paddocks, and so poo-picking is not a fail-safe way of removing the problem. Whilst 'best practice' is to take a blood sample to run a tapeworm test in late autumn/early winter, if you choose not to do this then it is best to assume that your horse does have tapeworms and treat for them annually.

Weighing up the risks, which may vary from yard to yard, it is suggested that a single treatment between December and February is sufficient.

Small redworms



Small redworms are the most deadly of all the parasitic worms that live in horses. WECs are not suitable for detecting an encysted redworm burden, as the encysted worms are immature and therefore not producing eggs. The severe damage caused by this type of parasite infection occurs when the arrested larvae of this parasite all reactivate at the same time and migrate out from the intestine walls. This typically occurs in spring and can cause severe damage to the horse's intestines.

Our laboratory offers a blood serology test for identifying encysted redworms and can be used in combination with tapeworm testing in late autumn/early winter.

New horses

These should be dosed with Equest Pramox immediately before or upon arrival, where the worming history is poor or uncertain, regardless of the time of year. Ideally new horses should be kept stabled or in a separate paddock for a few days while they are passing out any dead and detached worms in their droppings.

Young and older horses

Young and very old horses, with poorer immunity, are more susceptible to the effect of worms and should be treated separately from the rest of the herd.

Please contact us for more specific advice about these age groups, or any other questions you may have about worming.