

Validation of New (Best Practice) Parasite Control Measures for Horses

Dr Martin Nielsen from University of Kentucky collaborated with researchers at AgResearch, Massey University and private veterinary practice to investigate different parasite control programmes on Ascarid and Cyathostome populations on studfarms in New Zealand. With help from studfarm managers and equine veterinarians, the researchers compared traditional deworming programmes with currently recommended programmes with reduced use of dewormers in foals and mares. The foals and mares were followed for 6 and 12 months, respectively, and were weighed, received a health check and were examined for parasites at multiple time points during the project.

There were large differences in the number of deworming treatments, with the traditionally dewormed groups receiving about three times as many treatments as the lesser treated groups. However, the results showed that these fewer deworming treatments had no negative health effects in neither foals nor mares. In the foals, parasite egg counts were higher in the group that received fewer dewormers, whereas no egg count differences were observed between the mare groups. These results support the advice that traditional frequent deworming regimens should be discouraged. More work is needed to evaluate the performance of different combinations of dewormers in the longer term.

Nielsen, M. K., Gee, E. K., Hansen, A., Waghorn, T., Bell, J., & Leathwick, D. M. (2020). Monitoring equine ascarid and cyathostomin parasites: Evaluating health parameters under different treatment regimens. *Equine Veterinary Journal*;00:1-9