



Veterinarians and Horse Owners Team Up to Implement New Deworming Strategy

When Kevin Nelson, DVM, Union Grove, Wis., hosted a barbecue and fecal egg testing party, it was the most well-attended educational and social event Bristol Veterinary Services had ever sponsored. Barbecue and fecal egg testing? That's right.

"We wanted to talk with horse owners about old deworming versus new deworming strategies and thought having an event, with fecal egg testing right on site, was a creative way to boost attendance," Dr. Nelson says. "It worked. We had more horse owners there than at any other educational event we had held in the past. What that told us is horse owners are interested in and receptive to changing their deworming strategies."

The original concept of rotating equine deworming products as a way to reduce the development of resistance was created more than four decades ago.¹ Standard practice since then has been to rotate different products throughout the year but to treat every horse identically, without knowing if that horse is a high, moderate or low shedder of parasite eggs. Although seemingly a sound strategy at the time, it simply doesn't make sense to treat every horse the same given that 20 percent of horses harbor 80 percent of the parasites.¹

"Based on scientific evidence, we now know there is a more effective way to manage parasites," says Hoyt Cheramie, DVM, MS, manager, Merial Large Animal Veterinary Services. "Through fecal egg counts, we can identify the high, moderate and low shedders and treat each horse based on its specific needs. Then, following the individualized treatment plans, we can use Fecal Egg Count Reduction Tests (FECRTs) to help determine whether or not specific products are effective against the parasites present on a particular farm. Without this information, horse owners may be deworming in the dark – and perhaps spending money on products that aren't effective."¹

Dr. Nelson and his associates hosted the barbecue and fecal egg-testing event at Four Winds Equestrian Center, a barn ideally situated to implement a strategic deworming program. With more than 50 horses, multiple pastures and paddocks, and numerous horse owners, a sound deworming strategy was a must. Although the barn owners and their customers had been following a rotational deworming program, it didn't take much to convince them there was a better way.

“Once we started educating people about the importance and value of strategic deworming, they really showed an interest in adopting this approach,” says Dr. Nelson. “It was simply a matter of sharing the information and showing them through fecal egg counts how every horse is different. We were then able to talk about specific programs tailored to each horse’s needs, which can ultimately result in spending less money and not giving a horse medication it doesn’t really need.¹” Besides educating horse owners individually or through events, veterinarians can refer them to www.rethinkdeworming.com Merial’s website dedicated to advanced parasite management. A one-stop resource, the site is part of the “Greetings Human” campaign, which uses humor and parasite banter to help draw people in to what can be perceived as a somewhat dry topic.

In addition to access to important information on the site, www.rethinkdeworming.com offers veterinarian-focused features such as fecal egg count tracking charts and educational materials.

Part of an effective parasite management program includes one that addresses tapeworms, and ZIMECTERIN[®] Gold is the first dewormer approved for such control with a single dose.² ZIMECTERIN Gold combines ivermectin, a leading ingredient that controls a wide variety of parasites with praziquantel, an ingredient that specifically controls tapeworms. Together, they provide excellent equine parasite control. ZIMECTERIN Gold is approved to control more species and stages of equine parasites than any other brand, including benzimidazole-resistant small strongyles.² It controls 47 species and stages of equine parasites in all.²

Important Safety Information: Not for use in humans. Keep than and all drugs out of reach of children. In horses, there have been rare reports of swelling and irritation of the mouth, lips and tongue following administration of ZIMECTERIN Gold. These reactions have been transitory in nature. Do not use in other animal species as severe adverse reactions, including fatalities in dogs, may result.

About Merial

Merial is a world-leading, innovation-driven animal health company providing a comprehensive range of products to enhance the health, well being and performance of a wide range of animals. Merial employs approximately 5,600 people worldwide. Its 2010 sales were more than \$2.6 billion. Merial is a Sanofi company.

For more information, please see www.merial.com.

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¹ Kaplan RM. These ain't your father's parasites: Dewormer Resistance and New Strategies for Parasite Control in Horses. *Proceedings of the Florida Equine Institute and Allied Trade Show 2009*:1 – 8.

² ZIMECTERIN Gold label.

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