

**Managing Parasites Around the Farm**

If you are part of the growing trend of urban farming, hobby farming, or small to mid-scale farming you already know that there are many responsibilities. You put a lot of time into your farm and want to know the products and services you choose work just as hard as you do, especially when it comes to keeping your animals healthy.

In addition to fleas and ticks, internal worms are a common problem in most animals as they are easily ingested in the environment, and – if left unchecked – may cause weight loss, increased susceptibility to diseases, poor growth, weakness and can even be life-threatening. Most worms live two lives: one inside your animal and one outside. One of the best things you can do for your animals is to implement a strategic parasite control plan that takes both into account.

**The main culprits**

***For Horses:***

Small strongyles are considered the most common internal parasite problem in the adult horse today. When small strongyle larvae are ingested, they burrow into the wall of the intestine. As many as 90 percent of the larvae may become encysted in this manner1 and remain in this stage of development for up to 3 years.[[1]](#footnote-1) Over time, encysted larvae continue to accumulate in the intestinal wall. Inflammation of the intestinal wall may lead to ill thrift, weight loss, or protein loss in the horse. Occasionally, more severe complications may occur when the encysted larvae start developing again and emerge (typically in the spring). This may cause severe problems for the horse, and even death.

In young horses, the roundworm is the greatest concern and presents a two-pronged threat. When eggs are ingested, the larvae hatch and migrate, eventually invading the lungs, creating inflammation and ill thrift. Coughing associated with this lung inflammation may be confused with other inflammatory airway diseases. Larvae in the lungs get coughed up, swallowed and passed into the intestinal tract where they become large adults (growing up to 12 to 15 inches) in the small intestine. Severe ascarid (roundworms) infections can create intestinal obstruction that could lead to impaction colic or intestinal rupture, which can be fatal. Roundworm eggs are passed in the feces and are very hardy, potentially staying around to infect and re-infect horses for years.

Clinical signs will vary depending on the type and number of worms, but include listlessness, inappetence, recurring colic, weight loss, swelling, diarrhea, and possibly death.

In addition to routine pasture and paddock manure removal to reduce your horse’s overall exposure to parasite eggs, strategic use of equine dewormers is very important. A veterinarian will be helpful in determining the right equine deworming program for your farm. Deworming programs should be guided by the use of fecal egg counts (FEC) and fecal egg reduction tests (FECRT).

SAFE-GUARD® (fenbendazole) horse dewormer comes in pellets, EQUI-BITS®, and paste forms for convenient deworming options. It is effective against many of the most common intestinal parasites in horses, including large and small strongyles, ascarids and pinworms.

***For Cattle:***

There are many worms that infect cattle, including lungworms, stomach worms and intestinal worms. An individual animal may have many of these at once.

Adult parasites produce eggs that are passed in the feces. The eggs hatch, producing larvae that develop and are consumed by grazing cattle. Once inside a new host, the process starts over again.

Parasites have a tremendous ability to survive on pasture. Infective larvae eggs can survive the winter and become active with warm weather. Infection is most likely to occur when temperatures are between 60° and 80°F and when there is adequate rainfall.

Cattle with severe worm burdens can show signs of diarrhea, anorexia and lethargy. A mild-to-moderate worm burden can also cause disease and stress the immune system, making the animal more prone to other diseases. If not held in check, internal parasites can lead to reduced feed intake and production, resulting in less consumption of energy, protein, vitamins and minerals.

Managing parasites in cattle can be a challenge, especially if the animals are not regularly handled. Fortunately, there are deworming solutions uniquely geared to grazing operations. SAFE-GUARD® (fenbendazole) is available in multiple formulations including feed pellets, cubes, blocks, mineral, paste and suspension, making it an effective and convenient choice for any cattle operation.

***For Dogs:***

Dogs that spend time outside are at an increased risk of infection since sources of parasite infections are more likely to be found outdoors. The four major types of intestinal parasites of outdoor dogs are the roundworm, hookworm, whipworm, and tapeworm.

Sources of infection will vary depending upon the specific parasite. For hookworms and roundworms, puppies are commonly infected by their moms through the placenta and the milk, so early intervention is necessary. Hookworms can also enter through the pads of the feet and don’t need to be ingested. Other common sources for parasites include soil, feces, rabbits and rodents.

While symptoms vary depending upon the specific parasite, health problems can range from diarrhea, vomiting, anemia, and dehydration to itching, stunted growth, rough coats, weight loss, and even death in extreme cases.

SAFE-GUARD® (fenbendazole) Canine Dewormer is a safe and highly effective treatment for eliminating a variety of intestinal worms including six species of the four major parasites found in dogs that spend a lot of time outside, including whipworms and *Taenia* tapeworms.

Talk to your veterinarian today about the benefits of SAFE-GUARD® for your farm. A veterinarian will be able to guide you on the best use of dewormers such as SAFE-GUARD® for effective management of parasites.

*[Side Bar]*

3 tips to reduce the risk of parasites in the environment:

* Remove horse manure from stalls daily and from paddocks and pastures twice weekly before strongyle eggs have a chance to hatch and develop into infective larvae.
* Don’t overstock pastures or allow pastures to become overgrazed.
* Pick up dog feces to help protect your dogs as well as your family from exposure to zoonotic parasites.

*[End side bar]*

**Bottom line**

Raising animals so that they are healthy and productive means a lot of hard work, but the reward is well worth it. By implementing a strategic deworming plan, you can relax knowing you are reducing the risk of worms for your horses, cattle and dogs.

For more information, visit <https://www.merck-animal-health-usa.com/safe-guard/>

Consult your local veterinarian for assistance in the diagnosis, treatment, and control of parasitism.

***IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION:***

*SAFE-GUARD® Equine: Do not use in horses intended for human consumption.*

*SAFE-GUARD® Cattle: Do not use in beef calves less than 2 months old, dairy calves and veal calves. A withdrawal period has not been established for this product in pre-ruminating calves. Additionally, the following meat withdrawal and milk discard times apply: SAFE-GUARD Paste: Cattle must not be slaughtered for 8 days. For dairy cattle, the milk discard time is 96 hours. SAFE-GUARD Suspension: Cattle must not be slaughtered for 8 days. For dairy cattle, the milk discard time is 48 hours. SAFE-GUARD® ENPROAL® Type C Medicated Block: Cattle must not be slaughtered for 11 days. For use in beef cattle only. SAFE-GUARD® 20% Protein Type C Medicated Block: Cattle must not be slaughtered for 16 days. For use in beef cattle only. Safe-Guard Type A and other medicated feed products (pellets, cubes, free-choice mineral, or free-choice liquid): Cattle must not be slaughtered for 13 days. For dairy cattle, the milk discard time is 60 hours.*

*SAFE-GUARD® Canine Dewormer: For animal use only. Do not use in pups younger than 6 weeks. Do not deworm a dog or puppy that is sick. Approximately 1% of dogs had vomiting associated with the use of this product.*

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**The main culprits**

*For Horses:*

* **Ascarids** (roundworms) are the primary threat to young horses. Infectious ascarid eggs are ingested by the horse and immature ascarid larvae migrate through the liver and lungs before arriving in the small intestine where they will mature to adults.
* **Small strongyles** (cyathostomes) are considered the primary parasite problem in adult horses today. They burrow and encyst in the lining of the large intestine and can stay there for years evading the effects of most dewormers. Eggs are laid in the pasture and hatched larvae are ingested by the horse.

In addition to routine pasture and paddock manure removal to reduce your horse’s overall exposure to parasite eggs, strategic use of equine dewormers such as SAFE-GUARD® (fenbendazole) horse dewormer is very important. SAFE-GUARD comes in pellets, EQUI-BITS®, and paste forms for convenient deworming options and is effective against many of the most common intestinal parasites in horses, including large and small strongyles, ascarids and pinworms.

*For Cattle:*

There are many worms that infect cattle, including lungworms, stomach worms and intestinal worms. An individual animal may have many of these at once. Adult worms produce eggs that are passed in the feces. The eggs hatch, producing larvae that develop and are consumed by grazing cattle. Once inside a new host, the process starts over.

Managing parasites in cattle can be a challenge, especially if the animals are not regularly handled. Fortunately, there are deworming solutions uniquely geared to grazing operations. SAFE-GUARD® (fenbendazole) is available in multiple formulations including feed pellets, cubes, blocks, mineral, paste and suspension, making it an effective and convenient choice for any cattle operation.

*For Dogs:*

Dogs that spend time outside are at an increased risk of infection because sources of parasite infections are more likely to be found outdoors. The four major types of intestinal parasites of outdoor dogs are the roundworm, hookworm, whipworm, and tapeworm.

Sources of infection will vary depending upon the specific parasite. For hookworms and roundworms, puppies are commonly infected by their moms through the placenta and the milk, so early intervention is necessary. Hookworms can also enter through the pads of the feet and don’t need to be ingested. Other common sources of parasites include soil, feces, rabbits and rodents.

SAFE-GUARD® (fenbendazole) Canine Dewormer is a safe and highly effective treatment for reducing the six species of the four major parasites found in outdoor dogs, including whipworms and *Taenia* tapeworms.

**Bottom line**

Raising animals so that they are healthy and productive means a lot of hard work, but the reward is well worth it. By implementing a strategic deworming plan, you can relax knowing you are reducing the risk of internal worms for your horses, cattle, and dogs.

For more information, visit [www.science-of-safe.com](http://www.science-of-safe.com) for horses; [www.safe-guardcattle.com](http://www.safe-guardcattle.com) or [www.safe-guard-for-dogs.com](http://www.safe-guard-for-dogs.com).

Consult your local veterinarian for assistance in the diagnosis, treatment, and control of parasitism.

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1. Corning S. Equine cyathostomins: a review of biology, clinical significance and therapy. Parasit Vectors. 2009; 2(Suppl 2): S1. doi: [10.1186/1756-3305-2-S2-S1](https://dx.doi.org/10.1186/1756-3305-2-S2-S1) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)