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WORMING IN CATTLE AND SHEEP

Anthelmintic wormer groups:

1. Benzimidazoles (BZ - White)
2. Levamisole (LV - Yellow)
3. Macrocyclic lactones – including avermectins and mibemycins (ML - Clear)
4. Amino acetonitrile derivatives (AD - Orange)
5. Derquantel (SI - Purple)



The majority of anthelmintics (wormers) are effective against the major species of roundworms (gut) and lungworm. Some also have activity against liver flukes, tapeworms and ectoparasites (mites and lice). They come as injectables, pour-ons, boluses, oral drenches, in feed preparations and dips for sheep.

Each wormer within each anthelmintic group has its own withdrawal period for meat and milk, please ask your vet about these or read the data sheet provided with the wormer.

At housing time it is important to choose an anthelmintic that is effective against encysted larvae as these can cause type II winter scour (diarrhoea). At the recommended dose rates most of the anthelmintic groups are suitable for this except for the levamisoles.



Anthelmintic resistance

Anthelmintic resistance is a growing concern throughout the world and is currently widely reported in sheep. Strategies such as the Sustainable Control of Parasites in Sheep (SCOPS) have been developed to help combat this problem. Reports of resistance in cattle are relatively uncommon compared with sheep and goats.

To minimise the risk of resistance developing:

1. Discuss a worming protocol with your vet.
2. Administer wormers as instructed per the manufacturer guidelines including weighing animals to ensure correct dosing.





3. Monitor worm burdens and use anthelmintics only when necessary and chose the most appropriate one.
4. Monitor efficacy of the anthelmintic used.
5. Quarantine new animals to prevent transfer of resistant worms .

Monitoring worm burdens

Faecal egg counts (FECs) are used for measuring worm burdens in livestock and horses. Ask your vet for more information about this test or drop a faecal sample into the practice.

Do you need to treat?

1. Which animals are high risk? – The young and the old and those in high stocking densities.
2. Has recent wet weather increased the risk of exposure to flukes?
3. Are the FECs high enough to warrant treatment?
4. Consider withdrawal periods for dairy and milk cattle.
5. Consider then time of the year and the lifecycle of the parasite you are trying to treat or prevent.

