



Worm Egg Counts (WEC's)

Internal parasites are ubiquitous; horses are exposed throughout their lives and form immunity to very few types of parasite. Traditionally, vets and horse owners have relied on chemical wormers to try and make horses “worm free.” However concerns about parasites becoming resistant (when a parasite population previously controlled by a drug is no longer susceptible to it), combined with there being no new wormers in development, means that this is no longer an option. We now need to move toward managing horses with an acceptable (low) level of parasite burden.



Worm egg counts (WEC's) play a very important role in new worm control management systems. A WEC is a measure of the number of worm eggs in your horses dung sample. The sample is examined under a microscope to see how many eggs are present. The eggs are measured in eggs per gram (epg). The examination detects roundworm and the laying adult stages of small and large redworm.

Worm egg counts are useful for assessing whether the chemical intervals of a worming program are suppressing egg laying activity. They can be used to detect resistance to chemical wormers and they will also detect severe parasite infections.



As a general rule, horses with a parasite burden over 200 eggs per gram of faeces require treatment. Horses with a smaller burden than this do not require treatment; their parasite burden is considered insignificant and is left in *refugia*.

Yards that have relatively static horse populations should consider using WEC's to determine whether or not there is any need to worm through the summer. As a minimum a WEC should be conducted annually in the grazing season to check that your worm control programme is working effectively.

The Equine Veterinary Clinic carries out WEC testing in house.

HOW TO SUBMIT A WORM EGG COUNT SAMPLE

1. Collect fresh faeces from your stable or field. Ensure you know which faeces came from which horse.
2. Invert your collection bag (plastic bag, freezer bag etc.) over your hand and take a sample of the faeces one faecal ball is a sufficient amount to test.
3. Send first class mail or drop the sample in to The Equine Veterinary Clinic, Turningshaw Farm, Turningshaw Road, Houston, PA6 7BP. Please ensure that the sample is labelled with your horses name, your name and contact details.
4. Label the package pathological specimen.
5. If you are not a client of the practice please include a cash payment with the sample or pay at the practice by cash or credit card.
6. We will have the results back to you within 24 hours.
7. Prices for worm egg counts are ;1-4 samples £8.00 each, 5-10 samples £7.00 each and 10+ samples £6.00 each. (Prices include Vat)

Please Note : WEC's do not detect encysted redworm, or tapeworm. A tapeworm antibody blood test is used to measure tapeworm exposure. Horses should be wormed for encysted redworm in January as per The Equine Veterinary Clinics worming regime.

Please contact the practice if you have any questions about WEC's Tel 01505 610100.