



## Guide to Egg Count Results in Horses

### INTERPRETING ROUNDWORM EGG COUNT RESULTS

It is very difficult to give hard and fast rules on interpreting egg counts, as there are so many variables to consider. These include:

The table below offers a guide to egg counts. It is not hard and fast for many reasons, which include those stated below. StockWatch suggests you contact your vet for the best advice.

#### What do my results mean? epg (eggs per gram)

Horses
< 200 epg: Drench probably not required
200-500 epg: Seek Advice
> 500 epg: Drench probably required

Remember horses under stress are more vulnerable to the effects of worm infestation and may require treatment at lower levels.

#### Age of Animals:

Adult Horses animals in good condition tolerate worms much better than young or very old and poor horses.

#### Nutritional Status & Paddock Conditions:

Well nourished Horses develop can withstand a worm challenge better than poorer animals. Sometimes moving horses onto a better paddock is as good as a drench.

#### Physiological Status:

Are the horses young and growing, pregnant or rearing young? All these factors can place added stress on their systems and render them more susceptible to worm infestations.

#### Weather Conditions & Outlook:

Seasonal weather conditions need to also be considered and how they will impact your horses and the worm numbers in the paddock. Warm, moist conditions can cause worm numbers to increase and become a problem very quickly.

#### Grazing & Management:

Cross grazing can be an effective tool if you graze more than one species. Most worms are species specific and do not infect other types of animals. It can be a useful way of cleaning up the numbers of eggs and larvae on your pasture, as they do not survive in the second animal species.

Spelling paddocks can be useful but the length of time required will depend on weather conditions, pasture length and the types of worms present. Some worms can survive for a number of years. Short term spelling has little effect on worm control. Studies show a paddock would have to be rested for more than 10 weeks in the autumn and winter months to have a significant impact on reducing the numbers of worm larvae present.

*Worm egg counts considered with the other factors listed gives you the power to make an informed decision. As you the horse owner knows all the factors above by using the chart you can decide if drenching is required.*

## **YOUR REPORT:**

The report shows numbers of Strongyle roundworm eggs present (Large Strongyles and Small Strongyles) along with any other parasite species observed. The numbers of eggs present (and therefore the worm burden) is the important issue. Larval Culturing and Differentiation is generally not required.

Your report will also provide a comment on the level of Coccidia cysts and Tapeworm eggs if observed.

**Coccidia:** Is a condition often associated with stress in young stock, which can be increased by overstocking, severe weather conditions, poor nutrition and worms. Generally unless very high levels are observed they are not considered to have a detrimental effect.

**Tapeworm:** We report the presence of tapeworm eggs. Whilst tapeworm egg output is not regular like the roundworms they still show up in testing.

**Liver Fluke:** (*Fasciola Hepatica*) Horses grazing creeks and wet marshy areas favoured by the fluke snail (*Lymnaea tomentosa* - an indigenous freshwater snail) can become infected. Liver Fluke Test Results are represented as either Positive or Negative. A positive result indicates the presence of adult liver fluke. If positive, management actions are most likely required.

Remember:

If in doubt get expert advice to help interpret egg counts. Your vet would be the best place to start.

*Can you afford to be feeding worms!*  
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