

PORT PERRY VETERINARY SERVICES

-QUARTERLY-

FECAL EGG COUNTS FOR HORSES AND SMALL RUMINANTS

You have probably heard a lot about the fact that resistance to dewormers is becoming a problem, and that many of us are likely deworming our horses and sheep/goats too much. One of the techniques we use to counter these issues is fecal egg counts.

Fecal egg counts involve counting the number of eggs seen on a special microscope slide and performing a calculation to generate the count in eggs per gram of manure. The eggs we see include strongyle and ascarid (roundworm) eggs from horses and coccidia, GIN and nematodirus eggs from ruminants. Tapeworms cannot typically be identified using this method. The fecal egg counts are performed for a number of reasons including to check if a certain dewormer is working, to identify whether an animal needs deworming or not, and they help determine whether a specific horse is considered a "low or high shedder." By classifying horses this way we are reducing the need for deworming certain horses because horses with low egg counts typically always have low counts and therefore need less deworming than those with high egg counts. "High shedders" represent a small percentage of the horse population and are responsible for the majority of the parasite burden on each farm. Even with good management,

these horses are more likely to become re-infected quickly and are more likely to contaminate the environment. We do not generally classify small ruminants as "low" vs "high shedders."

To have a fecal egg count performed on your animal, follow these steps:

- 1) Collect the freshest sample possible in a baggie or clean container (2-3 fecal balls from a horse is adequate, a handful of manure from a small ruminant is needed).
- 2) Refrigerate the sample after collection until you get it to us, ideally within a day. Room temperature is fine if you're driving it over to us directly.
- 3) Bring it during business hours between Monday and Friday.
- 4) We will perform a fecal egg count using the McMaster method and will call you with the results and our recommendations.

WHAT'S NEW AT THE CLINIC?

This is a little late, but we hope that you all had an enjoyable and restful Christmas. We also would like to wish everyone all the best in 2014! Over the past few months you may have noticed a few new faces around the office. We would like to welcome Kathy to the PPVS team! She will be helping you with booking your appointments, billing, and placing your orders.

Drs. Rachel Stadnyk and Bob McCrae are using DairyComp, which will help them to make recommendations regarding managing your cows while out at your farms for herd checks. If you use DHI, and would like for them to access your records; please call us and we can get the form to you to sign.

The veterinarians have been busy learning while trying to stay out of the cold! Dr. Rachel Stadnyk recently attended a meeting about mastitis in dry cows and pain management for cows. She also attended a meeting about cow welfare and antibiotic resistance. Dr. Harry Morrison attended the American Association of Equine Practitioner's conference in Nashville in December, learning about a variety of topics related to equine medicine and lameness. Drs. Rachel Busato and Allison Doherty got to chat with future equine veterinarians at a dinner at Flamboro Downs in November.

PAIN MANAGEMENT IN RUMINANTS

Pain management is a very important aspect of production on all farms but is often one of the easiest to overlook. Here are a couple of day-to-day events where pain management should always be considered.

Dehorning

Dehorning techniques vary from farm to farm, from using caustic paste or a bud dehorner at a few weeks of age, up to using gaugers, wire or a saw if they are older. This is a major area where pain management must be implemented as standards of care are changing. No matter the age, all calves/goats should be given local anesthetic freezing. If you do not already do this, please ask your veterinarian at the next herd visit to demonstrate how to freeze the animals. Lidocaine is a great freezing agent and takes about 5 minutes to work. Although the time for the freezing to kick in is often a reason people don't freeze at all, if you freeze three or four animals at a time, the first one will be frozen and ready for dehorning once you finish freezing the fourth one. If the animal has bigger horns that require any tool other than a bud dehorner, on top of the freezing, they should be given a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) such as Metacam, Anafen or Banamine. Bigger horns will still be painful after the freezing wears off, which is why this is necessary. The one exception for

freezing currently is with the use of caustic pastes. There is no evidence that pain management makes any difference yet, but more research is being done. Overall a good dehorning protocol to implement would be to use lidocaine freezing, dehorn at a young age, and use an NSAID if the animal isn't done until it is older and has bigger horns.

Castration

There has been a lot of research looking into freezing calves prior to castration, but at this point no studies have proven it to be beneficial. If they are older with large testicles an NSAID helps keep them comfortable and productive after the procedure.

Calving

When we need to assist a calving/lambing/kidding it often means we need to manipulate the animal a lot and pull with some degree of difficulty. It has been shown that ruminants benefit from pain management if they required any level of assistance during delivery. They will recover faster and start eating more rapidly when given pain medication. An interesting study showed that Banamine did

help cows recover faster but it also increased the likelihood of retained placentas. This would be a case where it is better to use Anafen or Metacam.

Calving also hurts the calf. This is an area most people don't consider. If assistance is required studies also show it's advantageous to give the calf an NSAID. These calves have improved suckle reflex, volume of milk consumed, better weight gain in the first week, and improved health score.

Mastitis

Mastitis is not a comfortable condition. An NSAID will help decrease pain, and edema/swelling. It will also make the animal more comfortable allowing less of a drop in DMI and overall production.

Diarrhea

Calves that are scouring and weak can recover faster with the help of pain management. An NSAID is helpful because it allows the calf to be more comfortable. They will rest more on the first day, which is a necessary step in recovering. The pain management also decreases feeding assistance required.

Review of Commonly Used NSAIDs

Drug	Route	Duration of Action	Milk Withdrawal	Meat Withdrawal
Meloxicam (Metacam)	IV or SQ	3 days	96 hours	20 days
Ketoprofen (Anafen)	IV or IM	24 hours	0 hours	1 day
Flunixin (Banamine)	IV only	24 hours	36 hours	6 days
ASA (Aspirin)	Oral	12 hours	0 hours	0 hours