

Ask the VMD

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Are parasites bugging my cows?

A reader asks: We are planning to worm our cattle. With so many products on the market, what should we look for in a worming medicine? It is best to worm the cattle in the feed, by bolus, or tube them? Without a lab check, is there any way to know if the animals are infested? What parasites normally affect cattle?

Dr. Sheaffer comments: It's good you're concerned about internal parasites in your cattle.

Without modern husbandry practices of concentrating many cattle on small pastures or feedlots, numbers of parasites can build up to a harmful level quite rapidly.

You did not mention if you have a beef or dairy herd. This will determine somewhat the type of worm medication that you will use.

Many wormers have restrictions on age, pregnancy and lactation. For example, if you use thiabendazole, which is usually readily available from veterinarians and other suppliers, on lactating dairy cows, you must discard the milk for eight

milkings after dosing. There is at least one other product on the market that can be used with the feed on lactating cows without discarding the milk, such as organo phosphate products.

This type of worm medication doesn't seem to be detected in the milk, but the effectiveness of the product as a wormer is not certain. It is used especially in herds where the greatest percentage of cows are infested very heavily, and the dairyman can't afford to discard all of his milk for eight milkings.

The organo phosphates are sprinkled lightly on the feed for five days. In a heavily infested cow herd, 30-40 per cent of the parasites may be treated which is some help.

I generally recommend that the dairyman wait until the cow is dry and then treat her individually with thiabendazole. If your herd consists of pregnant cows and heifers, only certain medications are safe to administer. Always carefully read and follow the label directions. If you have any doubt about a specific medication, consult your veterinarian.

The method of worming that is best is the one that

works best in your particular housing situation. Ideally, each animal should be caught up in a chute or headgate, and given the proper dosage for its size and weight.

Oral boluses, oral paste or injectable wormer can be used on an individual basis.

Some of our clients do not have adequate restraint facilities so that using pellets on the feed is best for them. If you plan to mix wormer with the feed, make sure that it is safe, palatable, and properly mixed. Your veterinarian can help you calculate how much wormer should be mixed with the amount of feed your cattle will eat in one meal.

Fecal exams for internal parasites are routinely performed at least three types of facilities in our area.

First, most veterinary hospitals perform both smears and floatations on fresh cow manure samples submitted by farmers.

Government announces poultry price plan

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Department of Agriculture announced Saturday a program to provide more chicken for donations to hospitals, nursing homes and other institutions, and to remove price-depressing supplies of poultry from domestic markets.

Carol Tucker Foreman, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Food and Consumer Services, said the action is being taken because contracts for poultry exports to the Soviet Union could not be fulfilled as a result of the President's suspension of trade with that country on January 4.

The action announced today has two parts. First, the Department will invite bids this next week for a supply of whole frozen chicken, at least equivalent to that which had already been packaged for shipment to the Soviet Union.

This action is being taken under the authority of Section 32 of Public Law 320, which provides that perishable commodities that cannot be sold by producers at reasonable prices may be purchased by the government for use in food assistance programs.

"By making these purchases, we hope to improve the market demand and eliminate excess supplies caused by the trade suspension.

"President Carter has said actions will be taken, not to guarantee profits for ex-

porters, but to prevent catastrophic losses by producers. We think that by making additional purchases of poultry above what we normally would have purchased for our programs, we can help maintain reasonable prices for poultry products," Foreman said.

Second, the Department will increase its regular purchases of poultry (under Section 6 of the National School Lunch Act) to help absorb the extra supply which may have been generated to fill the Soviet contract.

Chicken will be purchased in frozen, cut-up or cooked, breaded form for use in the school lunch program.

Foreman said, "Chicken has been one of the most popular commodities in our school and other feeding programs. We are confident that the poultry will be well used, and that the poultry industry will be protected from devastating losses."

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Secondly, state diagnostic laboratories do the above plus certain special techniques for difficult to detect species of worms.

Thirdly, institutions like Penn State and the U. of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, at Kennett Square, can run both routine fecals and special techniques.

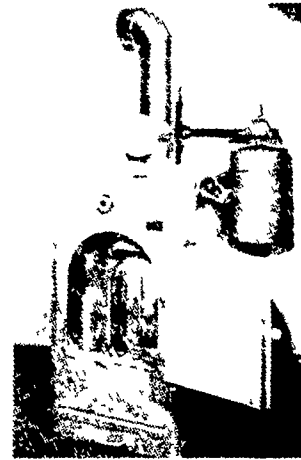
The tests are designed to locate and identify parasite eggs, called ova, and/or larval forms of the parasite.

For good parasite control, you should have laboratory work done at least three times each year. If your cattle are concentrated in a relatively small area, more frequent fecals may be necessary. Costs for each

exam can range from about \$2 to \$10, depending on techniques needed.

Next week, we will discuss the various species of internal parasites in cattle.

If you have a question you would like to have answered by the team of doctors at Valley Animal Hospital, send it to Ask the VMD, Box 366, Lititz, PA 17543.



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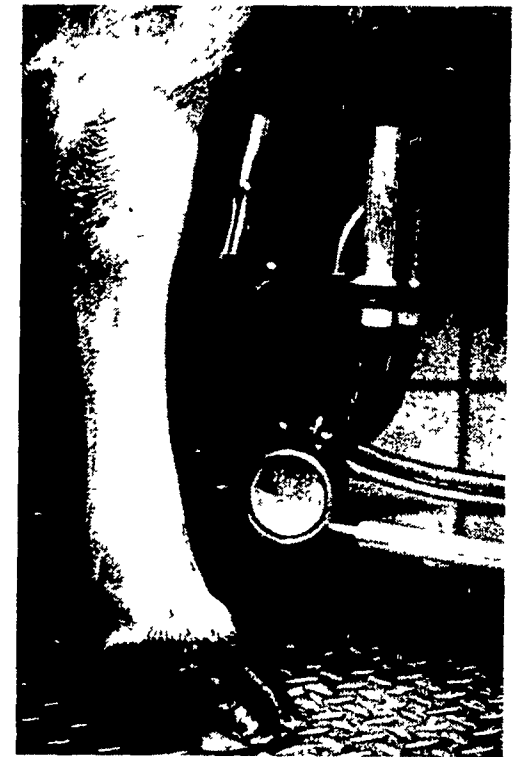
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