



Timely Topics

When Deworming is Not Enough

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Animals that have a heavy parasite load are often compromised on several levels related to their overall health. If barber pole worm (*Haemonchus contortus*) is the primary gastro-intestinal parasite the animal is carrying, loss of blood makes the animal weaker. Other worms may cause diarrhea which can result in dehydration. The animal may lose its appetite, so it loses weight and becomes even weaker due to lack of nutrition.

arrhea to help reduce dehydration.

If the animal is "down" or extremely weak, immediate attention is needed. Electrolytes can be given to improve hydration and perhaps provide some supplemental energy. Human products (i.e. Gatorade®, Powerade®, Pedilyte®) may be used if livestock products are not available. Nutritional drenching supplements for quick energy should be considered, especially if the animal is not eating.



Image by S. Schoenian

Clean water along with high protein feed or forage that is very palatable (tasty) should be provided for easy access without much moving around if necessary. If the animal is not eating, drenching (or tubing) the animal may be necessary until eating continues. Powdered protein supplements mixed in water with electrolytes can help keep the animal on track as well.

Depending on the status of the animal, supportive therapy may be needed around the time of anthelmintic treatment (deworming). Animals that are a FAMACHA® 4 or 5, would likely benefit from removal from contaminated pastures to avoid reinfection and placement in a barn or other area for protection against additional environmental stress (weather, predator watch, competition for food).



Image by S. Schoenian

Vitamin K results in blood clotting and could be a beneficial supplement to deworming in the case of barber pole worm infection. In addition, although it does not cure anything, kaolin pectin or even human products such as Pepto Bismol® may stop or slow di-

Research has not been conclusive in the use of mineral supplements such as iron in recovery from parasitism by the barber pole worm. However, anecdotal evidence from goat and sheep producers indicates that use of iron supplements such as injectable iron or oral iron, vitamin/mineral supplements (i.e. Red



Cell®, Iron Power®, Perktone®) have greatly decreased recovery time from anemia. Normally, a change in FAMACHA© score takes a couple of weeks, but producers providing the supplements have claimed changes in a few days with severely anemic animals.

Supportive therapy along with effective deworming drugs may help to reduce mortality or decrease recovery time in sheep and goats.

The ruminant gastro-intestinal tract makes the B vitamins for animal use; GI tract disturbances seen in parasitism (or antibiotic use) may reduce Vitamin B availability, so supportive injections are often used. The B vitamins help with liver function and use of proteins and fat. Vitamins B12 and B9 (folate) are critical for red blood cell formation, so would be necessary for recovery from anemia. A concentrated form of B12 is available with a veterinarian prescription and might be warranted in extreme cases, but Vitamin B complexes are available over the counter.



Image by S. Schoenian

Supportive therapy along with effective deworming drugs may help to reduce mortality or decrease recovery time in sheep and goats. However, avoiding parasites completely would be even better. Contact your local county extension office or veterinarian to learn more about controlling gastrointestinal parasites in goats and sheep.



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