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Parasite Control

Because you can't see them doesn't mean your herd is parasite-free... just assume they invited themselves over!

Parasite control is one of the principal steps in maintaining herd health and productivity. It is also a great way to assure animal welfare as it improves cow comfort. The presence of parasites in a herd will harm the animals and your profits. They do so by suppressing appetite, reducing feed efficiency and decreasing immune response at the animal level. That negatively impacts productivity (milk production), reproduction, growth and development and herd health. Parasites are present even in confined herds that don't go on pasture. It is important that you establish a parasite control protocol with your veterinarian, suited to your herd situation and housing. Deworming protocols have to be effective, or else it can lead to parasite resistance, and that's another problem...

Information on parasites and clinical signs:

	Internal parasites <i>= silent robbers</i>	External parasites <i>= frustrating irritants</i>	Liver flukes <i>= cattle grazing in wet areas with snails</i>
Clinical signs	Symptoms are often unseen	Rough hair coats, itching, and weight loss	Lack of appetite, slow steady weight loss, and pain
Examples of parasites that affect cattles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown Stomach worm (<i>Ostertagia ostertagi</i>) • Roundworms (<i>Cooperia spp.</i>) • Barber's pole or large stomach worm (<i>Haemonchus contortus</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biting or chewing louse (<i>Bovicola bovis</i>) • Sucking louse (<i>Solenopotes capillatus</i>) • Mange (<i>Sarcoptes scabiei</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fasciola</i>

Key factors for an effective deworming protocol:

- Getting the timing right:** An annual pour-on treatment late in the fall is the most popular protocol, mostly for lice and mange control in the winter months. All new animals introduced in the herd outside of the fall annual treatment should also receive a dewormer before introducing the herd. **Animals grazing on pasture should get an additional round of dewormer** about 4 weeks after turnout, mostly for internal parasites control.
- Choosing a dewormer:** A wide variety of anthelmintics (dewormers) are available for farm animals. At the clinic we generally provide eprinomectin **Eprinex® to dairy animals** (zero milk and meat withhold, safe to use on pregnant and open animals, improves milk production by 1kg/day/cow on average) and ivermectin **Ivomec® to beefs and other non-dairy animals** (49 day meath withhold, long lasting protection).
- Maximize efficacy by applying the product correctly:** Reduce product runoff and maximize efficacy by applying the correct dosage along the topline, from withers to trailhead. If needed, a weight tape can be used to accurately determine weights and dosage.
- Reducing parasite resistance:** Resistance rises from parasites surviving the treatment. The latest trend and recommendation is to perform some **selective non-treatments**. This will ensure that some parasites are unexposed to the dewormer and will help maintain susceptibility ("refugia" principle). To do so, select the top 10-15% best producing animals and those should not be treated.