

## Equitait Fact sheet - Pinworm (*Oxyuris equi*)

Infection with the horse pinworm is not uncommon and although the presence of the parasite in the intestines rarely causes any clinical signs as the female adult worm lays eggs it can cause an intense itching around the anus. This can result in the animal rubbing this area resulting in broken skin, bare patches and inflammation of the skin over the rump and tail head.

The mature adult females have pointed tails which can reach 10cm in length. The mature males are generally less than 1cm long. The 4th stage larvae vary from 5-10mm in length and have tapering tails resembling carpet tacks.

The mature female worm ends up at the rectum where she will intermittently extrude through the anus to lay eggs as clumps which can be seen grossly as yellowish white gelatinous streaks on the perineal skin. The adult female produces 60,000 eggs a day and they stick to the hind quarters where they cause much irritation. The eggs and larvae are spread to other parts of the body often with grooming brushes.



### Diagnosis:

Diagnosis is often presumed on the clinical signs of anal itchiness and the presence of the egg clumps or adult worms. Pinworm eggs are rarely found on fecal worm egg examinations but can be observed in material taken from the perineum.

In more recent times persistent presence of these pinworms has been observed despite repeated treatments with wormers. While some have questioned the presence of resistance to the wormers there has been failure to prove this and some believe that our more modern wormers are more efficient at being absorbed earlier in the gastrointestinal tract thus leaving very little active ingredient by the time it gets to the rectum resulting in an inefficient kill of the adult female pinworms.

### Treatment:

1) Worm as a one off with triple the recommended dose of an ivermectin based wormer eg Eqvalan, Bimectin, Noromectin, Maximec (alternatively some people have used a double dose of pyrantel with some success or a 5 day course of fenbendazole/panacur at 10mg/kg)

2) Wash horse's perineum and hind quarters with warm soapy water, towel dry, then paint on the propylene glycol ivermectin/doromectin solution with a disinfected brush (paintbrush or hoof brush). Leave it painted on and repeat washing and applying once daily until solutions runs out approx. 1 week. When grooming the affected horse start at the head and progress to the hind end. Then finish and not go back to the head again! The brush should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after grooming and must not be shared with other horses.

3) Decontamination of the environment is important. Completely clean out the stable and power hose. Keep an eye on any contacts and if they exhibit any signs, put them through the same regime. Decontaminate rugs.