



## Are Tapeworms a Threat to the Health of My Horse?

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Tapeworms can be a health concern for horses of any age<sup>1</sup> and are common in grazing horses around the country.<sup>2</sup> In fact, more than half of the horses in one survey had tapeworms.<sup>2</sup> Infection rates were as high as 95 percent in the upper Midwest.<sup>2</sup> In southern states, infection rates were as high as 82 percent.<sup>3</sup>

“It doesn’t matter where you live, tapeworms are likely a concern in your area – which means it’s important to make sure your parasite control program includes effective tapeworm control,” says Hoyt Cheramie, DVM, MS, Manager, Merial Veterinary Services. “Spring is a good time to review your strategic parasite control program utilizing selective deworming and tapeworm control. Treating for tapeworm infections, as recommended by your veterinarian, can easily and inexpensively help prevent related health concerns.”

It used to be thought that tapeworms could live in a horse without really affecting its health, but researchers disproved that idea, showing that *A. perfoliata* can be a major cause of colic.<sup>4,5</sup> Some research suggested that 80 percent of ileal impaction colic cases are associated with tapeworms,<sup>4</sup> and they can also cause many other kinds of problems in the digestive system. For instance, tapeworms can attach to the ileocecal area and cause inflammation, ulceration and bowel obstruction.<sup>4,5</sup> In addition, tapeworms can cause a potentially life-threatening condition known as intussusception, which is the telescoping of the intestine into itself.<sup>4,6,7</sup>

“Given the potential health issues resulting from tapeworm infection, treatment is paramount to the health of your horse,” says Dr. Cheramie. “Not all dewormers are effective against tapeworms, which means horse owners need to choose a product carefully.”

ZIMECTERIN® Gold (ivermectin/praziquantel) is one of the few parasite control products that controls tapeworms – in addition to the 46 other different species and stages of parasites it treats.<sup>8</sup> It’s more than 99 percent effective in eliminating *Anoplocephala perfoliata* in horses.<sup>8</sup>

Merial is a world-leading, innovation-driven animal health company, providing a comprehensive range of products to enhance the health, well-being and performance of a wide range of animals. Merial employs approximately 5,700 people and operates in more than 150 countries worldwide. Its 2010 sales were more than \$2.6 billion. Merial is the Animal Health subsidiary of sanofi-aventis. For more information, please see [www.merial.com](http://www.merial.com).

### Important Safety Information

Warning: Not for use in humans. Keep this and all drugs out of reach of children. In horses, there have been rare reports of swelling and irritation of the mouth, lips, and tongue following administration of ZIMECTERIN Gold. These reactions have been transitory in nature. Do not use in other animal species as severe adverse reactions, including fatalities in dogs, may result.

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<sup>1</sup> Meadows DG, Henton JE, Reinemeyer CR. Control of internal parasites of the horse. THN-4002. The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service. Available at: <http://www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/animals/EquineFacts/THN4002.pdf>. Accessed August 11, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Reinemeyer CR, et al. A prevalence survey of antibodies to *Anoplocephala perfoliata* in horses from the United States. WAAVP Proceedings. 2003:18.

<sup>3</sup> Reinemeyer CR. Update on equine tapeworms presentation notes. Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association Equine Committee. 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Proudman CJ, Trees AJ. Tapeworms as a cause of intestinal disease in horses. *Parasitology Today*. 1999;15(4):156-158.

<sup>5</sup> Pavone S, et al. Pathological changes caused by *Anoplocephala perfoliata* in the equine ileocecal junction. *Vet Res Commun*. 2010;34(1):53-56.

<sup>6</sup> Barclay WP, Phillips TN, Foerner, JJ. Intussusception associated with *Anoplocephala perfoliata* infection in five horses. *J AM Vet Med Assoc*. 1982;180(7):752-753.

<sup>7</sup> Martin BB, et al. Cecocolic and Cecocolic Intussusception in 30 Horses. AAEP Proceedings. 1998(44):254-255.

<sup>8</sup> Based on data provided in FDA Freedom of Information summaries.