Resistance! Resistance! And more resistance! We all know gastrointestinal parasites in horses can lead to many complications, which is why we want to deworm our horses multiple times per year. However, this is NOT the best strategy anymore since there are many worms that are becoming resistant to our deworming medications!

Here are strategies to prevent resistant worms on your farm and maintain happy and healthy horses:

1. Treat the individual horse, not the herd: perform fecal egg counts (FECs) on all horses and only deworm those that have an egg count above a pre-determined cut-off number provided by your vet. It is normal for horses to have a certain number of gastrointestinal parasites.
2. Determine resistance presence: have a fecal egg count reduction test (FECRT) performed to determine if you have a resistance problem in your herd or on your farm.
3. Prevent contamination: remove feces from the pasture weekly or biweekly. By regularly removing feces from the pasture, you are also removing susceptible and resistant worms.

It requires diligence to prevent further resistance from developing. However, we must all work together to ensure we prevent this from happening. Otherwise, we will run out of effective drugs to kill worms.

How have you incorporated fecal egg count information into your herd management?

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References
