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Internal parasites and livestock health

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According to 19th livestock census, Punjab has a buffalo, cow and goat population of about 51.6 lac, 24.3 lac and 3.2 lac, respectively and these livestock produces milk in the tune of 1 crore 12 lac tonnes annually. Livestock farming had always played its significant role in the diversification of agriculture in the state. Livestock practices keeps changing with time. Earlier times, grazing practice used to be one of the major activities of dairy farming but now a days, stall feeding is more popular. Therefore, it is important these days to enhance knowledge about the scientific care and management of animals and follow the principle of "*Prevention is better than cure*". This can actually decrease our unplanned expenses and so, increase profitability.

Internal parasites/worms (Endoparasites) commonly affect health of animals in many ways and causes economic losses by reducing growth, production and reproductive efficiency. They damage the intestinal mucosa and affect its digestive efficiency. Because of this, growth rate decreases and maturity is delayed. In addition, there is decreased immunity and animals become prone to different diseases. Worms can also cause sudden death if there number is very high. Hence, an effort has been made in this article to share knowledge about endoparasites and their effect on health of animals.

Depending upon the part of the body where they reside, worms can be divided in four categories:

Stomach worms: These types of worms live in the abomasums (part of stomach) of animals and suck blood. These also damage gastric glands and affect digestive efficiency. Examples of these types of worms are Hemonchus, Ostertagia and Trichostrongylus.

Intestinal worms: These worms stay in intestines and causes dysentery. Examples are Cooperia, Nometoderus and Trichuris. Apart from these Bunostomum which is also known as hookworm sucks blood from intestines. Commonly seen in feces of the animals, are the white ribbon type worms also called Tapeworms. Tapeworms live in the small intestines and can be as long as 6 feet. If the number increases, then they can cause impaction also.

Lung worms: These can damage lungs and causes infection due to which animal feel difficulty in respiration and can cause death of animals.

Liver flukes: These flukes (Fasciola) worms look like leaves and live in the liver. These can damage liver and hamper digestion.

Worms can be of different shapes like round, flat and leaf like. Different types of the worms shed eggs of different shapes which can be identified in fecal examination in the veterinary laboratory.

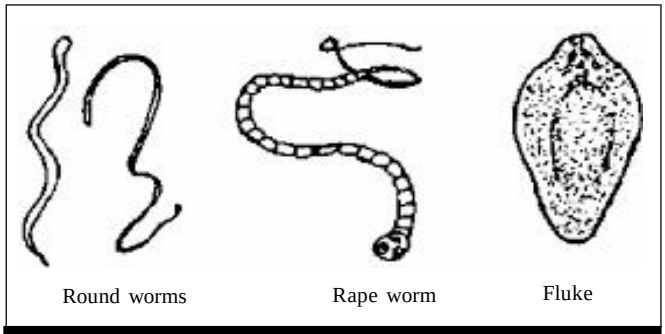

Fig. 1 : Different types of shapes of worms

Signs of animals affected with internal parasites:

– Eating of dung, soil, stones or rope
– Watery and soiled eyes
– Rough skin without natural shine
– Decreased growth rate
– Decreased milk yield
– Emaciation or weakness
– Constipation or diarrhoea
– Protrusion of belly (Ascites)
– Anemia
– Bottle jaw (Oedema)
– High mortality in calves
– Sometimes Anestrus or repeat breeding.

Preventive measures include clean handling of feeds and fodders. Avoid dung mixing with the feeds and fodder in the feeding manger. Provide fresh and clean water. Regular deworming (every 3 months interval) can reduce disease incidence. Following medicines can be given for deworming in consultation with the animal healthcare specialist at your nearest Krishi Vigyan Kendra or veterinary hospital:

Fig. 2 : Cow effected with parasites

Fig. 3 : Calf effected with parasites

Albendazole Fenbendazole
Ivermectin Moxidectin
Piperazine Oxfendazole
Closentel Levamisole

Selection and dosage of these medicines depend on age, body weight and pregnancy status of the animal. Therefore, expert should be consulted before administration. Every time medicine should be changed to prevent resistance. By controlling these endoparasites, animal health can be managed in a better way and losses can be prevented.

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