

# Preventing Haemonchosis

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## What is Haemonchosis?

- Haemonchosis is a parasitic disease caused by roundworm. The roundworm is also called barber's pole worm, twisted wireworm or large stomach worm.



Adult worms in abomasum

## Which animals are affected? Does the disease infect humans?

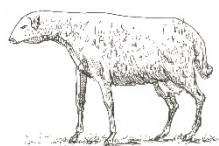
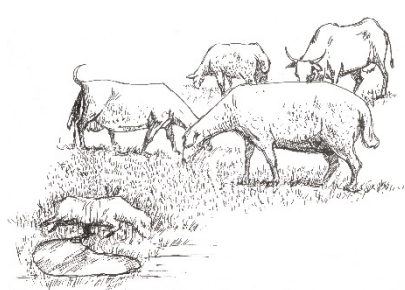
- Sheep, goats, cattle and other domestic and wild ruminants can be affected.
- People can't be infected.

## How is the disease transmitted?

- Livestock become infected after ingesting roundworm larvae while grazing on pastures.
- Indoor infection can happen through contaminated hay or feed.

## What are the symptoms of Haemonchosis?

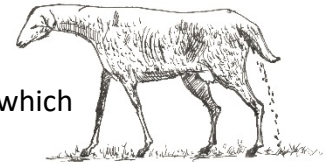
- The roundworm feeds on the blood of the host, causing anaemia. Eyes and gum mucous membranes become white as opposed to the normal pink.
- Submandibular oedema (bottle jaw) and increased heart and respiratory rates occur. Diarrhoea is not common.
- Disease can progress over weeks or months leading to general loss of weight and emaciation.
- Presence of many visible adult worms visible on the surface of the abomasum (fourth stomach compartment) at post-mortem.
- Ingestion of large numbers of larvae over a short period of time causes acute disease with lethargy, weakness and rapid loss of weight. This form of the disease typically affects lambs.



14 days later they  
mature into adult worms

1

Adult worms lay eggs which  
pass out in the feces



2

The 3<sup>rd</sup> stage larvae (L3) appear  
and migrate on to the pasture

## The life cycle

The eggs hatch within a  
few days and 1<sup>st</sup> stage  
larvae (L1) emerge



L1 develops and moults to  
2<sup>nd</sup> stage larvae (L2)



### Possible points to interrupt the cycle

- 1 – Deworm your flock with appropriate dewormer
- 2 – Rest pastures and rotate grazing

## How can I prevent the disease?

- Animals grazing on communal pastures should be treated at regular intervals following a seasonal calendar for deworming (depending on seriousness of the problem 2–4 times per year).
- Plan rotational grazing to reduce the contamination of pastures with infective larvae and avoid excessive stock density on pasture.
- Resting pastures over several months (i.e. keeping them free of livestock) will cause infective larvae to die
- Treat pregnant ewes 3–4 weeks before giving birth to prevent the periparturient rise in egg shedding.

## What should I do if I suspect my herd is infected?

- Do a strategic deworming of animals with appropriate drugs. Numerous broad spectrum anthelmintics are effective against adult worms and larvae, e.g. several benzimidazoles (albendazole, fenbendazole, etc.) and levamisole.
- Move animals to a low risk pasture to prevent reinfection after treatment.
- If moving them is not possible, they should be treated with a long lasting antihelminthic (closantel or moxidectin).

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