

BVA Position Statement on the use of Anthelmintics in Grazing Animals

1. The misuse of Anthelmintics and the development of resistance to them by parasites is an increasing problem in the treatment of sheep, goats and horses worldwide and an emerging problem in cattle.
2. Such resistance is a serious and increasing threat to the health and welfare of grazing animals. If unchecked, it could lead to none of the existing Anthelmintics being effective with a potentially catastrophic impact on animal welfare and economic production.
3. While Anthelmintics are a necessary option for treatment, their use must be judicious and based on sound veterinary principles, recognising that every application will increase the risk of possible development of resistance to Anthelmintics.
4. Resistance is reported mainly in gastrointestinal nematodes and, to a lesser extent, in liver fluke in sheep and against all three major classes of Anthelmintics (benzimidazoles, acetylcholine receptor agonists and macrocyclic lactones).
5. Strategies to limit this selection process must be practiced:
 - Avoiding too frequent and repeated use of Anthelmintics from the same class, over an extended period of time.
 - Seeking veterinary advice to ensuring no unnecessary usage because of misdiagnosis of symptoms.
 - Taking care not to underdose through underestimation of body weight, misadministration of the product, or lack of calibration of the dosing device.
 - Investigating suspected clinical cases of resistance to a particular Anthelmintic and ensuring effective treatment by using anthelmintics belonging to another pharmacological class.
 - Developing, with veterinary advice and through farm health planning, a worming strategy on the farm including a full grazing management programme to reduce the need for treatment and ensuring it is effective.