

Extension to introduction of the requirement for a veterinary prescription for antiparasitics

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Antiparasitic medicines were due to require a veterinary prescription from 1st of June 2022 – this has now been extended to 1st December 2022. The extension is to allow time for the full integration of the National Veterinary Prescribing System to be completed and to address any supply issues. From December, farmers will need a prescription from their veterinary practitioners when looking to buy livestock wormers, or dips and pour-ons for external parasites. Farmers will still be able to get these medicines dispensed from any licenced outlet where they currently buy these products, as long as they have a prescription.

The reason for this change to antiparasitics is related to the new Veterinary Medicines Regulations (EU 2019/6) that came into effect this year. When antiparasitic medicines were reviewed by the HPRA (Health Products Regulatory Authority), it was concluded that they no longer met the conditions to be exempt from prescription. The main reason for this, amongst others, was the increase of resistance by parasites to these products. Over the longer term, resistance poses a threat to the effectiveness of antiparasitic treatments, which will affect animal health and productivity. We need to promote the responsible use of antiparasitic veterinary medicinal products to safeguard their efficacy for the future and to slow the spread of resistance.

If the parasites on-farm are resistant to a certain wormer product, continuing to use that product will make the problem worse and be a waste of money for the farmer, as it is not effectively killing the parasites. A first step is to check that the products regularly being used on the farm are still working correctly. For products against stomach or gut worms, this can be tested by doing a drench test. Essentially this involves taking a number of faecal samples from a group, once before the treatment, and again 7-14 days after the treatment was given from the same group. Your veterinary practitioner can discuss the protocol for this test and the interpretation of the results, as well as the next steps if a product is found to be ineffective.

A newly developed Parasite Control Targeted Advisory Service on Animal Health (TASAH) can assist farmers with development of a parasite control plan. This voluntary programme funds a veterinary farm visit and two faecal egg counts and is open to all cattle and sheep farms in Ireland. This will allow for discussions about the best practices and planning for parasite control, in light of the increase of resistance. Parasite control is a complex problem and requires planning tailored to the farm. A parasite control plan should consider parasite factors, weather, testing, grazing and farm management for the individual farm. More information on the programme and how to register is available on the AHI website, [click here](#).



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PARASITE CONTROL TASAH CONSULT

A newly developed Parasite Control Targeted Advisory Service on Animal Health (TASAH) has now been launched for 2022. This new service is part of the Rural Development Plan 2014-2020, co-funded by the Irish government and the EU. The purpose of the Parasite Control TASAH is to facilitate discussions and planning between farmers and their veterinary practitioners on the best practices around parasite control and trying to minimise the further development of anthelmintic resistance. Resistance is a growing concern and is considered present when wormers no longer kill the target parasites and have become less effective. Parasite resistance and control is a complex problem and requires planning tailored to specific farms. A 'one size fits all' approach is not effective for parasite control. For this reason, AHI encourages a parasite control plan that considers parasite factors, weather, testing, grazing and farm management for an individual farm.

The Parasite Control TASAH can assist farmers by funding a veterinary farm visit and two faecal egg counts and is open to all cattle and sheep farms in Ireland. More information on the programme and how to register is available on the AHI website.

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