

## Background

Anthelmintics have been used to control helminth infections in horses for decades and has substantially reduced the incidence of helminth-related disease in horses (1).

## The Problem

Due to owners regularly and often treating horses with anthelmintics has compromised the efficiency of most deworming products – resulting in anthelmintic resistance (2). Therefore, interval treatment approaches are no longer considered to be an appropriate method of controlling helminth infections (3).

## UK Owners Worming Strategies

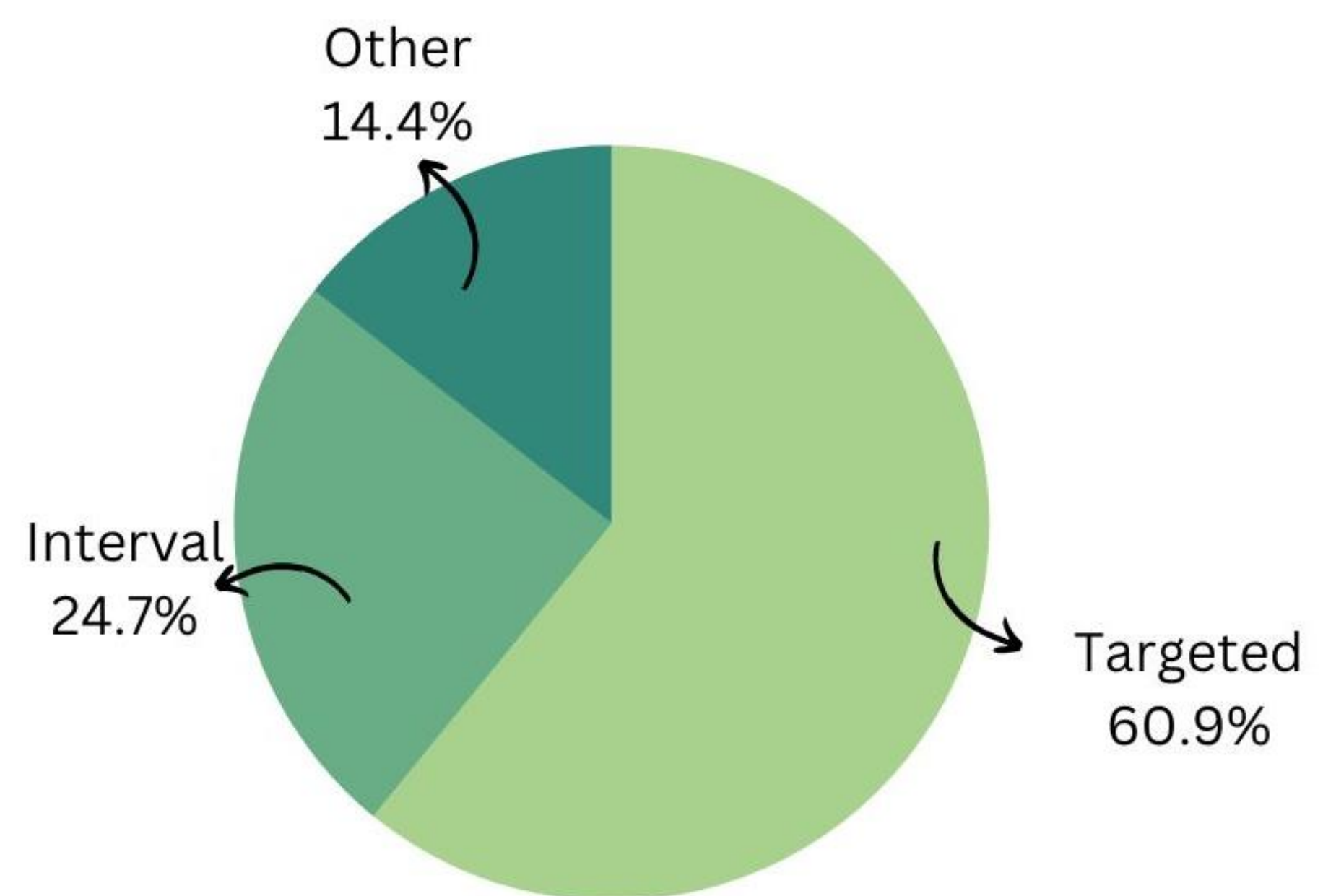


Figure 1: Percentage of respondents using different worming strategies (4).

## Legislation

The Code of Practice for the welfare of horses, ponies, donkeys and their hybrids issued under section 15 of the Animal Welfare Act of 2006 (UK) states: parasite control programmes should be established by a Veterinary Surgeon (VS) or a suitably qualified person (SQP) and should include faecal egg counts (FEC) and appropriate anthelmintic use (5).

## The Role of the VS

- 🐛 To implement targeted worming strategies (6).
- 🐛 Carry out helminth infection tests: FEC and ELISA (blood and saliva) (7).
- 🐛 Provide the correct anthelmintics for the targeting helminth (2).
- 🐛 Provide specific and clear pasture management (8).

## Are VS's Fulfilling their Role?

YES	NO
A source of advice (4,6).	Incorrect worming still heavily used (10).
Offer anthelmintic regimens (9).	Blanket dosing (11).
VS involvement increasing (4,6).	Owners buy anthelmintics from an SQP (12).

## The Barriers to Change

- 🚧 Cost and Expense (12).
- 🚧 Wormers can be bought over the counter / online (12).
- 🚧 Communication barrier between owners and VS's (11).
- 🚧 No cohesive advice (12).
- 🚧 Owners irrational fear between parasitism and colic (15).
- 🚧 Livery yard rules and systems (4).

## Future Improvements

- 🕒 Interprofessional collaboration: utilise the Veterinary Nurse (16).
- 🕒 Cross-industry stakeholder collaboration: affordability of diagnostic testing services (11).
- 🕒 Target livery yard managers: talks and programmes to enrol the whole yard (17).
- 🕒 Improve communication between owners and VS's (11).
- 🕒 Establish cohesive advice on anthelmintics (12).
- 🕒 Anthelmintics to be prescription with proof of testing (9).



Figure 2: A) FEC slide (13) B) Saliva test C) blood test (14).

