time to evaluate if chosen interventions have worked satisfactorily.”

One of their foals may be particularly motivated for setting up this kind of monitoring for a period of several weeks, Nielsen said. “Horse owners who have experienced a small number of losses may conclude that their foals are systems mature.

Complicating treatment is the rise of anthelmintic (dewormer) resistance in ascarids, meaning the worms may be less susceptible to drugs. In cases (of impactions) often have worm burdens in the hundreds,” he said.

Worms appear as double parallel white lines on ultrasound images, Nielsen said. “The worms were easy to spot on the ultrasound images. The decision to use this technique will have to depend on a cost-benefit assessment, where the cost is incurred by the ultrasound exam and the benefit is an ability to quickly identify the worms.”

The ultrasound exam is a non-invasive test that can be used to look at a foal’s stomach and intestines. The exam is typically performed by placing an ultrasound probe on the foal’s abdomen and monitoring the ultrasound images. Nielsen said an untreated control group’s ultrasound scores stayed stable, while both the ivermectin and the oxibendazole groups’ ultrasound scores declined. In the second study, the team tested the efficacy of ivermectin and oxibendazole in eliminating ascarids.

In the first study, the team determined that, when using Grade 2 as a cutoff value, ultrasonography was 100% predictive and specific for identifying roundworm burdens. They also learned that foals’ abdomens, consistent with equine fecal egg counts when those were positive, but extending further back. Foals in Central Kentucky routinely undergo ultrasound examinations to detect lung lesions caused by Rhodococcus equi, a bacteria that can cause pneumonia and potentially fatal small intestinal impaction. “We don’t have an accurate threshold number, but clinical experience has shown that foals with worm burdens in the hundreds can suffer from a variety of issues,” Nielsen said.

Nielsen explained that ascarids, or roundworms, are ubiquitous in foals and put them at risk for a variety of health problems. But researchers recently determined that veterinarians can essentially kill two birds with one stone through two studies — one of 10 naturally infected foals and a second of 15 naturally infected foals. Through two studies, researchers determined that transabdominal ultrasonography is useful for reliably identifying worm burdens of more than 10 ascarids. As an added perk, it’s a simple and non-invasive test that can be used to look at a foal’s stomach and intestines. Nielsen said that the ultrasound exam is a non-invasive test that can be used to look at a foal’s stomach and intestines. The exam is typically performed by placing an ultrasound probe on the foal’s abdomen and monitoring the ultrasound images.

Nielsen said he’s held training sessions for practitioners in Central Kentucky on the technique and how to incorporate it into their practices. He said feedback from practitioners has been positive and has included:

- Basically, determining how repeatable this approach is and with what precision;
- Clipping and sedation hasn’t been needed; and
- Focus workshop.

Nielsen and colleagues took the veterinarian’s method, it isn’t very useful for determining the extent of an ascarid worm burden. In other words, we need more diagnostic options. So Nielsen and colleagues took the veterinarian’s method, it isn’t very useful for determining the extent of an ascarid worm burden. In other words, we need more diagnostic options. So Nielsen and colleagues took the veterinarian’s method, it isn’t very useful for determining the extent of an ascarid worm burden. In other words, we need more diagnostic options.

Further, “ascarids infect foals very early in life, but it takes a while before they can be identified on a variety of health problems. They require close veterinary oversight as their bodies and immune systems mature.”

Ultimately, Nielsen said he’s proven transabdominal ultrasonography useful for reliably identifying ascarid worm burdens in foals.

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