



Barber's Pole Worm



Haemonchus contortus, also called Barber's Pole worm due to its characteristic stripey appearance, is one of the many gastrointestinal parasites affecting Alpacas. The worm can also be transmitted through cattle, sheep and goats.

Eggs are shed in the faeces of infected animals. The eggs hatch into larvae in the pasture and are ingested during grazing, then pass into the stomach of the animal and attach to the stomach wall. The parasite can be particularly devastating as it ingests blood of the host animal and can cause severe anaemia, weakness and death.

Use the following 6 point check list to check your Alpacas every day.

In animals affected with *Haemonchus* you may notice:

A = Appearance – Check the mucous membranes in the eye and mouth (gums). Normal mucous membranes should be pink. With *Haemonchus* the membranes may be very pale pink or white. Also animals may be weak and in severe cases collapsed or dead. Occasionally animals may show signs of colic also.

L = Locomotion – Affected animals are unlikely to move much as they are weak from the anaemia.

P = Poo – Animals are likely to have diarrhoea with Barber's Pole.

A = Appetite – appetite is often poor.

C = Condition – Weight loss or reduced weight gain is common with *Haemonchus*.

A = Attitude - Affected alpacas are lethargic, weak or collapsed depending on severity of the disease.

Apart from clinical signs a faecal sample for a faecal egg count can be helpful in diagnosis of

Barber's Pole as can a blood test to check a PCV (number of red blood cells left circulating in the body). This can give an idea of prognosis and whether a blood transfusion is needed to save the animals life.

Another faecal sample taken 10-14 days after treatment can show if the drench was effective or drench resistance is starting to develop.

Treatment for Barber's pole worm involves drenching the animal as soon as possible. For appropriate products and dosages please contact your Vet.

Other supportive treatments also involve resting the animal and avoiding stress and offering good nutrition for animals to regain weight and produce new red blood cells.

For any questions or concerns on this or other health issues in your Alpacas, please call us at Levin & Horowhenua Vets 06 368 2891.



Haemonchus
(Barber's Pole Worm)