

PRACTICE ABSTRACT: 11



Sustainable PARAsite Control
in Grazing Ruminants

Facilitate the adoption of sustainable measures for managing gastrointestinal parasites in grazing ruminants

A confirmed increase in antiparasitic resistance in all ruminant sectors across Europe

Given the confirmed and worrying rise in resistance to anthelmintics in all ruminant sectors across Europe, the implementation of sustainable gastrointestinal parasite management is becoming essential. In order to facilitate the adoption of sustainable practices, we have to understand existing practices, expectations and needs, as well as barriers and levels of actions for change. This is why SPARC partners conducted more than 300 field surveys on this topic in 2024.

Collection of practices and barriers to changes in practices

Treatment remains the most widely used practice, but **pasture management**, the use of **plant-based solutions** and **parasite analysis** are gaining ground. The adoption of sustainable practices remains fragmented due to multiple technical, economic and social barriers. **Habits, lack of time, complexity and diversity of messages circulating in the field, fear of economic losses, lack of knowledge and the need for scientific evidence** are the main obstacles.

A comprehensive approach to digestive parasitism in grazing ruminants

During these 300 surveys, farmers, veterinarians and advisors reported decreases in the effectiveness of deworming treatments, and even confirmed resistance across Europe in sheep, goats and cattle. Scientific studies point in the same direction.

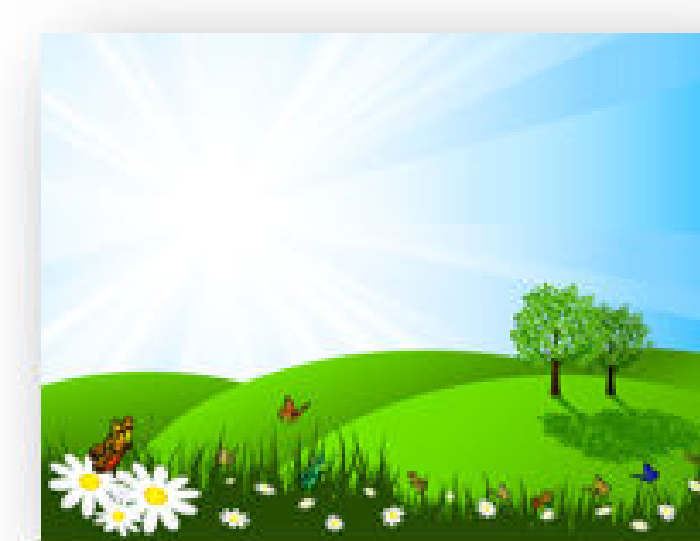
Taking the example of gastrointestinal strongyles control, during these surveys, several solutions were suggested : **pasture rotation** (cellular grazing, rotational grazing, block grazing, front and back wire grazing...), **plot sanitation** (ploughing, alternating mowing/grazing, etc.), **mixed grazing** (mixing animal species with different sensitivities to limit egg excretion on the plot, for example by mixing or alternatively grazing sheep and cattle).

Improving resistance and resilience requires a **balanced diet with adequate protein, mineral and vitamin intake**. **Multiple plant-based solutions** are also being tested with varying results depending on the study. It is the combination of different measures that help ruminants to better defend themselves against gastrointestinal parasites.

The development of **diagnostics and parasite analyses** should enable better treatment strategies to be devised when considered in conjunction with the farming context and grazing management. **Alternating molecules** is also part of good practice. **Selective targeted treatment** is relevant, and especially for gastrointestinal strongyles : treating only at some physiological stages (drying off, start of lactation, depending on the animal species etc.) or key periods (during pasture, etc.) and exclusively a portion of the animals according to different criteria (clinical signs, body condition, lactation number or age, etc.) is an approach that should be explored further.

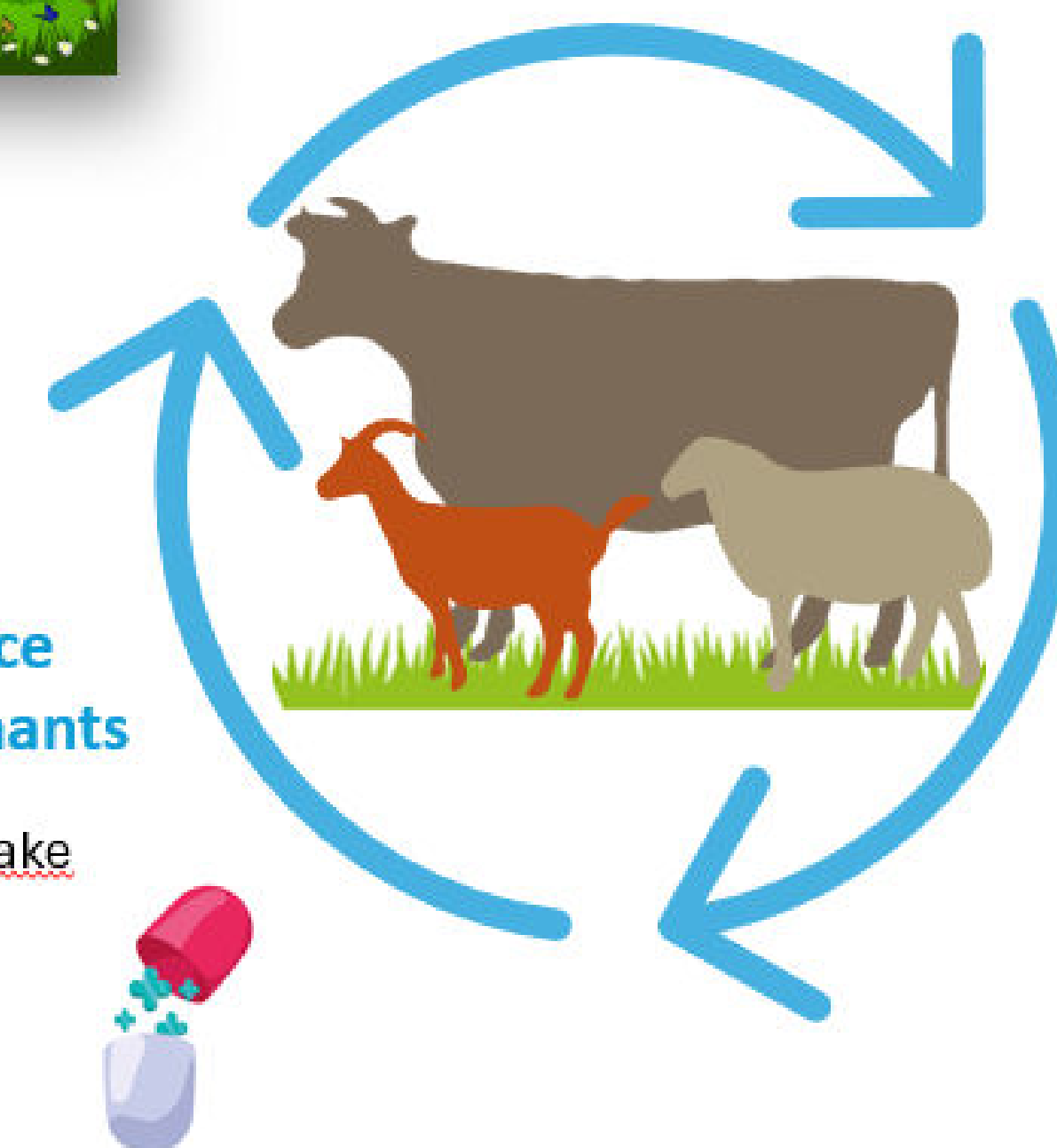
A commitment to sustainable worm control is essential to ensure the long-term health and well-being of ruminants while maintaining grazing. This need is well summed up by a sheep farmer:

"Resistance is a problem that could affect the farmer's ability to rear livestock on his farm in the future".



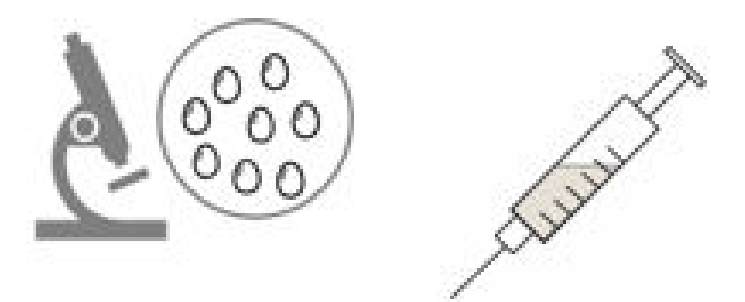
Limiting infestations in ruminants

- Grazing management
- Precautions when introducing or mixing animals from different herds



Eliminate parasites

- Diagnosis and analysis
- Reasoned use of deworming



Increasing the resistance and resilience of ruminants

- Balanced diet, protein intake
- Plant-based solutions

Sustainable management of digestive parasitism in grazing ruminants

(source: UMT Sabre, France, 2025)

Sustainable control of digestive parasites must be based on a **comprehensive, educational and farm-specific approach**, focusing on three areas : limiting infestations, improving the resilience of ruminants and rational management of treatments.

The use and dissemination of **good practice guides, decision-making tool for deciding whether or not to treat, tools for forecasting parasite infestation over the year and fast and cheap pen side tests for diagnosis** would facilitate the roll-out of sustainable management.

The use of sustainable practices would limit the technical and economic losses associated with parasites and avoid therapeutic deadlocks, which can lead to the cessation of grazing or even livestock farming.



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