Information about the Kentucky State University Cooperative Extension Program

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How to Identify and Monitor Internal Parasites in your Small Ruminant Herd

Dr. Jerusha (Jessie) Lay, Assistant Professor of Animal Health

What is the Difference Between a Fecal Floatation Test and a Fecal Egg Count Test?

A fecal floatation test is more sensitive and will allow you to identify more types of parasites. You can use it to determine if animals are infected with Haemonchus, Ostertagia, or other types of intestinal parasites. The fecal floatation test helps to detect the presence of worm eggs but does not indicate the exact amount in a fecal sample. On the other hand, a fecal egg count test, which is more complicated to perform, detects the number of worm eggs in 1 gram of feces.

What You Will Need to Carry Out a Fecal Floatation Test:

Compound microscope (at least 10x magnification; 40x allows better identification)

Microscope slides

Microscope cover slips

Fecal floatation solution

Fecal floatation containers (may be washed and reused)

Stirring stick (coffee stirring sticks work well)
Strainer (3-4 inch diameter kitchen tea strainer)
Disposable cups (3-4 oz. wax coated work well)

Fecal Floatation Directions

- 1. Place 1 to 2 balls of feces into disposable cup (3 to 4 if young lambs/kids).
- 2. Mix with about 10 mL of fecal solution.

- 3. Stir mixture, breaking up and dissolving fecal pellet.
- 4. Using tea strainer, pour mixture through strainer into a separate cup.
- 5. Pour fluid contents into a fecal container.
- 6. Add fecal solution until fluid level is just above the container rim.
- 7. Place microscope cover slip on top of the container and let sample sit for 10 to 15 minutes (very important).
- 8. Carefully remove the microscope cover slip and place it on a microscope slide.
- 9. Place microscope slide on stage of the microscope and focus.
- 10. Search slide for parasite eggs or oocytes in a methodical direction from top to bottom and side to side.



Using a Microscope

Using a microscope, like many other things, takes practice.

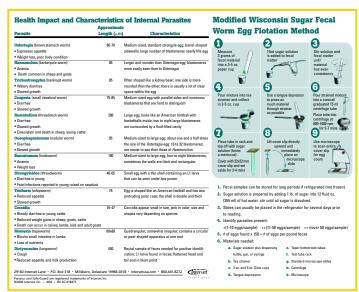
- 1. Put the microscope slide on the stage.
- 2. Move the dials that move side to side and up and down until the sample is directly over the light source.
- 3. Adjust the eye pieces (codicils) to your comfort. First, focus on the lowest magnification. To do this, look through the eye pieces and adjust the course focus until the image appears (image may be blurry). Use the fine focus for further adjustments until image is seen clearly.
- 4. Assess the sample by moving across, down, and in rows to examine the entire slide.

Note:

It is prohibited by the Kentucky Board of Veterinary Examiners to diagnose disease in animals if you are not a licensed veterinarian. While doing fecal tests on your own animals is allowed and encouraged to detect and treat intestinal parasites in your herd, you CANNOT perform this service for other farmers if you are not a licensed veterinarian. http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/FastFacts/pdfs/ contagious_ecthyma_F.pdf

Identification charts are helpful to keep as a reference. You may get one from your local veterinarian.







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