



Anthelmintic Resistance in Equine Gastrointestinal Nematodes: Challenges and Emerging Alternatives

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ABSTRACT

Gastrointestinal nematodes are still one of the major limiting factors for the health, welfare and productivity of horses globally. Cyathostomins, *Parascaris* spp., and *Strongylus* species are the most significant parasites because they cause significant clinical and economic losses from damage to gastrointestinal integrity, poor nutrient utilization, poor growth performance, and reduced health status. Past control strategies were mainly based on the use of anthelmintics of broad-spectrum effectiveness at high frequency, leading to significant decreases in morbidity associated with parasites. But with heavy use, and often indiscriminate use, of dewormers the development and prevalence of anthelmintic resistance is rapidly gaining levels of importance as one of the most serious issues facing horse parasite control today. Multidrug resistance (MDR) through resistance to major classes of anthelmintics (benzimidazoles, tetrahydropyrimidines and macrocyclic lactones) is now reported globally and is affecting the nematode population in New Zealand. Resistance is on the rise and traditional methods of parasite control are becoming increasingly unsustainable, so integrated methods of managing parasites are needed. This paper critically reviews the epidemiology and biology of important GIT nematodes of equids, the mechanisms of development of resistance, world-wide trends of anthelmintic resistance and limitations of present diagnostic methods. Moreover, other novel paradigms such as targeted selective treatment, pasture management, nutraceuticals, bio-control agents, phytotherapeutics, vaccines, microbiome technologies and precision parasite management technologies are covered. The review highlights the importance of not only using pharmaceuticals as part of a parasite control programme, but also non-pharmacologic measures to ensure effective use of the drugs and enhance the long-term health of horses.

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INTRODUCTION

Although the field of veterinary medicine closely related to livestock health and production has made many new advances, parasitic diseases are still a major problem in horse health (Agrawal et al. 2024). Gastrointestinal nematodes are one of the most common types of parasites found in horses worldwide and can have a big effect on horse health, athleticism, reproductive ability and economic productivity (Ogbein et al. 2022). Pasture-based

systems mean that horses are constantly infected with infective larval stages of parasites and are quickly infected by the parasites they meet (Sharpe and Kenny 2025). Traditionally, regular deworming practices revolutionized health care for horses, significantly lowering the incidence of clinical signs of parasitic infection and mortality (Turner 2024). In the past, the impact of routine deworming practices on management of equine health has been profound and has made a significant impact on the reduction of clinically visible signs of parasitic disease

and mortality (Rendle et al. 2024). But there has been extensive use of repeated mass treatment programs which have led to resistance developing to both classes of anthelmintic drugs (Harshita and Nonika 2024).

Anthelmintic resistance is the ability of a parasite to survive a dose of an anthelmintic which it was previously susceptible to (Marsh and Lakritz 2023). Frequent treatment and under-dosing, inappropriate drug rotation, and not considering the parasite ecology are important factors in resistance development (Ugoala 2023). Biological attributes of equine gastrointestinal nematodes that enable rapid adaptation are that they have broad genetic diversity, high reproductive potential and are environmentally persistent (Cunha et al. 2024). These properties enhance genotype selection for resistant types and impede the control over the long-term (Mapuranga et al. 2022).

With increasing worries about drugs becoming less effective, there's more attention now on focussed and evidence-based parasite control programmes (Shang et al. 2025). A thorough knowledge of parasite biology, host-parasite interactions, parasite resistance and alternative control options are essential for the sustainable management of parasites (Wells and Flynn 2022). This current review focuses on the most significant issues of gastrointestinal nematode anthelmintic resistance in horses and investigates new alternative drugs that could help maintain the effectiveness of current drugs and help achieve long-term control of these parasites.

Major equine gastrointestinal nematodes and their clinical importance

The gastrointestinal nematodes of horses are a group of species that have different life cycles, pathogenic characteristics and epidemiology (Khan et al. 2023). In these, cyathostomins are the most common and clinically significant group that occurs in horses all over the world (Lawson et al. 2023). There are over 50 species of

cyathostomins collectively called "small strongyles" (Halvarsson et al. 2024). They have a direct life cycle with ingested infective third stage larvae from contaminated pastures and then mucosal encystation in the large intestine (Kimeli et al. 2025). Encysted larval stages are a significant therapeutic problem, as the efficacy of many drugs is less against isolated stages (Marsh and Lakritz 2023).

The large strongyles (mainly *S. vulgaris*) are the most pathogenic of the equine parasites, because they migrate through the mesenteric arteries (Domshy et al. 2024). On migration, larvae cause vascular damage, thrombosis, ischemia and ultimately may cause death (thromboembolic colic) (Souto et al. 2025) (Figure 1). Presence of strategic deworming and this significantly lowered the prevalence in many areas, but due to decreased monitoring and treatment procedures, there are concerns re-emergence is a potential issue (Collyer et al. 2023). Foals and young horses are at the highest risk of being affected by *Parascaris* species (Boelow et al. 2023). They are very prolific and hardy in their environment, which contributes to their ability to spread (Hardy et al. 2025). In severe cases, intestinal blockage, stunted growth, respiratory symptoms due to larval migration and body condition problems occur (Shrestha et al. 2024). Increasing resistance of *Parascaris* to the macrocyclic lactones has raised significant concerns for the young horse industry (Martin et al. 2024).

Other nematodes of importance are *Oxyuris equi*, *Habronema* spp., *Trichostrongylus axei* and *Strongyloides westeri* (Amer et al. 2022). These parasites are less pathogenic but can be significant contributors to cumulative disease and are difficult to control in an integrated approach (Buchmann 2022). Given the diversity of equine nematode populations, there is a need for nematode-specific control strategies, considering the specific age of the host, their environment, and management (Playford and Besier 2025).

Major equine gastrointestinal nematodes and their clinical importance

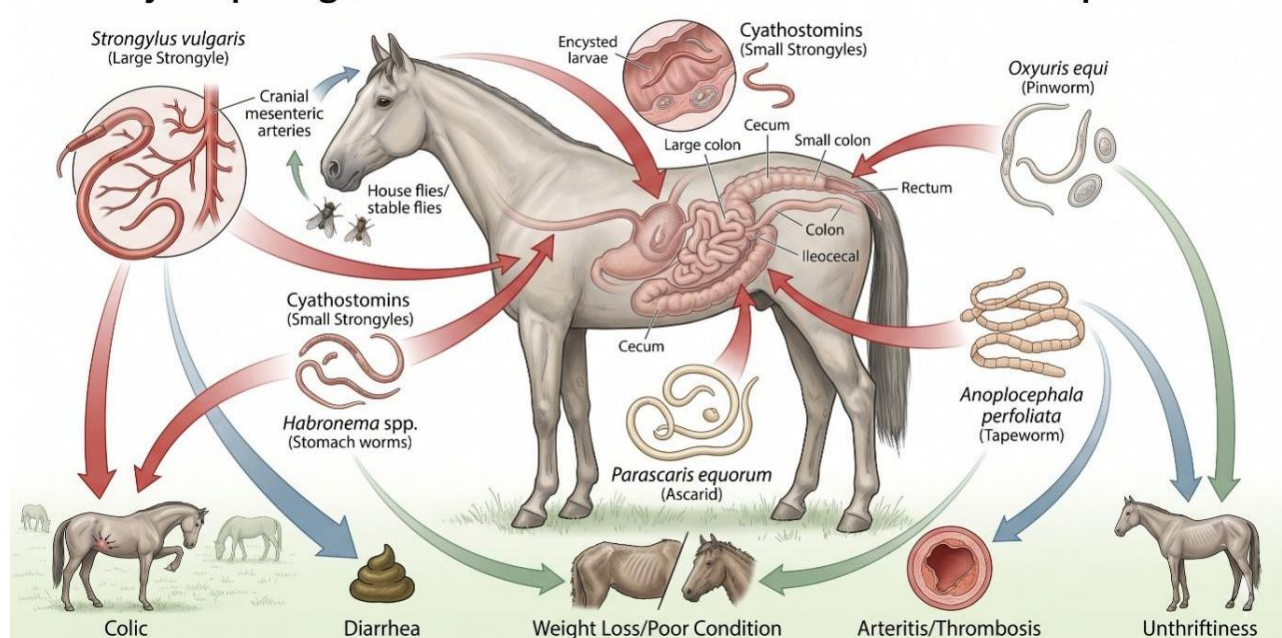


Fig. 1: Major equine gastrointestinal nematodes and their clinical importance.

Epidemiology and Transmission Dynamics

The epidemiology of equine gastrointestinal nematodes involves interactions between the biology of these parasites, host immunity, the environment and management systems (Wang et al. 2025). The effects of climatic factors on larval development and survival on pastures are strong (Cristaldo et al. 2026). The high temperatures and moderate humidity promote formation of infective stages, whereas extremes of temperature and humidity limit survival (Guarnieri et al. 2023). However, there are many that show a remarkable resilience and thus can survive in different climatic regions (Lüscher et al. 2022).

The main source of infection is from the contamination of pastures. If the grazing paddocks are over stocked, the horses are constantly re-exposed to infective larvae (Forbes and Ellis 2023). Fecal density is greater if overstocked and transmission is greater if there is more density of feces (Muñoz-Vargas et al. 2022). The mixed-age system of grazing adds to the infection dynamics with possible high parasite shedding by younger horses and reservoirs by older horses (Dowling et al. 2024).

The epidemiology is strongly related to the host immunity (Wolf et al. 2024). It is generally accepted that mature horses are partially immune to most nematode species and that their clinical disease severity and egg shedding is also decreased (Jürgenschellert et al. 2022). Foals and young horses are more resistant because their immune system is less developed (Bordin et al. 2022). The cause of the predominance of younger animals being affected by *Parascaris* infections and of the occurrence of cyathostomins in all ages is called age-related immunity (Buono et al. 2023).

Parasite transmission is heavily influenced by the management practices (Jack et al. 2022). The higher the likelihood of being exposed, the more often people move between facilities, the more communal grazing practices there are, and the less management of manure (Mwalugelo et al. 2024). Parasite epidemiology is also made more complex by the modern equine industries (racing, breeding and overseas transport); these all facilitate the spread of resistant populations of parasites throughout geographical areas (Sacarrão-Birrento et al. 2024).

Historical Evolution of Anthelmintic Use in Horses

Until modern equine anthelmintics were developed, the control of equine parasites was revolutionized (Cain and Nielsen 2022). The first generation of compounds, such as piperazine and organophosphates, were somewhat effective, but also had their narrow spectra and safety issues (Saad et al. 2025). The advent of the benzimidazoles was a significant improvement as they showed activity against multiple organisms and safety margins were greater (Hernández-López et al. 2022). The use of fenbendazole and its analogs saw a tremendous drop in parasite levels in the second part of the 20th century (Cray and Altman 2022).

Later, tetrahydro-pyrimidines and macrocyclic lactones were introduced and this led to further improvement of therapeutic possibilities (Shah and Kachhadiya 2025). Pyrantel compounds were effective against adult strongyles and ascarids; and ivermectin and moxidectin were excellent against several stages of the parasites

(Malik et al. 2022). These drugs were very convenient, wide in range and assumed to be reliable, so they were routinely administered and sometimes without diagnosis (Huelsmeyer et al. 2023).

The old deworming method used intervals to determine when to deworm regardless of infection status (every 6-8 weeks) (Gasparinho et al. 2022). These practices worked in the short term but had unforeseen side effects of selecting resistant parasites (Nielsen et al. 2023). Slowly the focus on resistance development changed and started to focus on more specific methods - the use of diagnostic monitoring and the conservation of refugia (Keppel et al. 2024).

Mechanisms Underlying Anthelmintic Resistance

The process of anthelmintic resistance occurs because of evolutionary selection mechanisms, which involve the survival of resistant members of an anthelmintic-treated population resulting in greater representation of them in future generations (Tenorio 2025). Parasites can build up mutations that reduce their susceptibility to a drug when they are being highly selected (Bharadava et al. 2024). The mutations of the beta tubulin genes are the main cause of benzimidazole resistance (Venkatesan et al. 2023). These mutations change the drug binding sites which lead to less binding with microtubules and hence less interference with cellular functions (Friedman 2022). Resistance phenotypes have been found to consistently be associated with single nucleotide polymorphisms at certain codons in several nematode species (da Silva Medeiros et al. 2022).

Several more complicated mechanisms have been linked with macrocyclic lactone resistance (Amdan et al. 2024). Multiple changes to glutamate-gated chloride channels, alterations to neuronal signaling pathway, increased drug efflux mechanisms and changes to pharmacokinetic interactions may all play a role in decreasing susceptibility (Lespine et al. 2024). Over-expression of transporter proteins that can remove drugs from the tissues of a parasite is one important resistance mechanism (Dimunová et al. 2022). The pyrantel resistance is related to changes in nicotinic acetylcholine receptor (Gallo et al. 2023). Structural changes desensitize the receptors, and prevent drug induced neuromuscular paralysis (Bickler et al. 2023). Some parasite populations show polygenicity of inheritance which makes the prediction and monitoring of progression of parasite resistance more difficult (Coffeng et al. 2024).

Development of resistance to equine nematodes is facilitated by their biology (Raza et al. 2023). Small populations lead to low genetic variation and quick spread of beneficial traits are possible with short generation times (Salgotra and Chauhan 2023). Regular treatments kill susceptible individuals and leave resistant individuals with more reproductive success (Pienta et al. 2025). When the pressure for drugs is intense and continuous, the development of resistance is a natural result of evolution, making it a part of their nature (Muteeb et al. 2023).

Global Status of Anthelmintic Resistance in Equine Nematodes

The development of anthelmintic resistance has become a world-wide issue and a problem in virtually all-important

equine production systems (Alara and Alara 2024). The level of cyathostomin resistance to benzimidazole drugs is now believed to be widespread and several studies have shown a dramatic decrease in the effectiveness of the drugs on several continents (Venkatesan et al. 2023). High prevalence of resistance is caused by the intensive use of these products and the lack of rotation over the past several decades (Endale et al. 2023). Evolution of Pyrantel resistance in cyathostomin has also been increasing (Alm et al. 2023). Although some efficacy is still variable in different areas, there is growing evidence of progressive selection pressure (fecal egg count reduction) (Morgan et al. 2022). Co-occurring benzimidazole and pyrantel resistance (MDR) is becoming more prevalent (Schlosser-Brandenburg et al. 2023).

Macrocyclic lactones were remarkably long-lasting but there have been indications of resistance in the past few years, especially in populations of *Parascaris* (Ewence and Whitlock 2024). Efficacy of ivermectin against *Parascaris* spp. has been significantly decreased now and has been well documented (Le et al. 2024). In general, moxidectin is more effective against some of the stages of a parasite but concerns about decreasing sensitivity have risen (Mwacalimba et al. 2024). Variations in climate, management, availability of treatment and drugs, and treatment frequency contribute to regional variations in patterns of resistance (Li et al. 2025b). However, the overall pattern suggests an overall decline in effectiveness in each of the big therapeutic groups (Albarracin et al. 2024). This is due to the increasing occurrence of resistant populations over a wider geographic area, which underlines urgent coordinated surveillance and sustainable control strategies (Struelens et al. 2024).

Risk Factors Contributing to Resistance Development

Resistance can be expedited by more than one management factor (McIntyre et al. 2023). The frequent blanket treatment programs are one of the most important drivers as they are the programs that exert the greatest selection pressure with the lowest numbers of susceptible populations (Ng'etich et al. 2024). This is further accentuated by treatment schedules which are set into motion by calendar dates rather than epidemiological evidence (Meyer et al. 2022). Historically, treatment intervals have been reliant on calendar dates rather than epidemiological evidence resulting in an accentuation of this (Kimbrough et al. 2024). Underdosing is another factor that must not be overlooked (Hunter and Blobner 2024). Errors in the estimation of weight often mean that not enough exposure is delivered and some individuals are partially resistant to death (Reeves et al. 2024). Risks of underdosing are further increased when administration techniques are not used correctly or when errors occur in the calibration of equipment (Mulac et al. 2022).

The higher the densities, the more intense the transmissions, and the more of the cycles are repeated (Xu et al. 2022). Pasture systems that are continuously grazed do not allow for a rotation and therefore have high contamination levels (Wróbel et al. 2023). Short quarantine is conducive to the spread of resistant parasites via movement of animals (Wei et al. 2023). Resistance development is greatly hastened if refugia are not used

(Rendle et al. 2024). Resistant gene can persist in the total population by means of refugia, in which the organism is not treated (Metzger et al. 2022). If refugia are eliminated via universal treatment programs, there is no more genetic dilution effect, and the problem of resisting genotype dominance is eliminated (Brown et al. 2022).

Poor monitoring practices are also important etale factors (George et al. 2022). Lacking a treatment that can be tested to assess its effectiveness, the use of a routine treatment would make it difficult to diagnose the onset of treatment resistance (Howes et al. 2022). There are also some limitations in diagnosing and the use of veterinary services is inconsistent, which impede implementation of evidence-based programs (Block 2024).

Diagnostic Approaches for Detection of Resistance

Good diagnosis is essential to successful parasite control. Fecal egg count test is a useful technique in determining the level of the parasite and the identification of high shedders (Nielsen 2022). The use of quantitative techniques like the McMaster methods enable routine monitoring and treatment decision making to be carried out (Elghryani et al. 2023a). Fecal egg count reduction testing is still the most used test for assessing the efficacy of drugs (Morgan et al. 2022). This is done by comparing egg counts before and after treatment to determine egg reduction percentages (Denwood et al. 2023). There is relatively easy access to interpretation, but it requires the establishment of standardized protocols and adequate sample size (Ahmed 2024).

Techniques for the larval culture are useful for species identification for morphologically similar egg species (Lira et al. 2023). Dominant populations of parasites can be identified and intervention strategies aimed at these parasites can be implemented (Gagne et al. 2022). But there are some factors, such as the requirement for labor and technicalities, that restrict the regular use (Guanglei et al. 2026). Diagnosis of resistance using molecular methods may be useful (Gerace et al. 2022). Polymerase chain reaction assays of mutations associated with resistance are more sensitive and earlier detect mutations than phenotypic methods (Huygens et al. 2023). The growing knowledge about the population genetics and evolution of pathogens with advances in NGS technology improve knowledge of parasite resistance evolution (Al-Malki 2025).

New technologies like environmental DNA surveillance, machine learning algorithms and automated image analysis could enhance monitoring capabilities in the future (Adebayo 2025). However, these need to be reduced, standardized and improved to be more easily available to help achieve widespread adoption (Rajaeifar et al. 2022).

Clinical and Economic Consequences of Resistance

Health and economic losses are caused using anthelmintics (Strydom et al. 2023). High blood parasite densities cause digestive inefficiency, hinder body condition, affect the performance of athletes and make them more vulnerable to secondary infections (Ullah et al. 2025). Clinical illness, such as diarrhea, weight loss, recurrent colic and poor growth reduce welfare and productivity (Al-Beltagi et al. 2025). Costs are not limited

to that of treatment (Gitlin et al. 2022). The effects of higher veterinary treatment costs, diagnostic costs, decreased production and reproductive capacity result in significant economic losses (Kappes et al. 2023). Moreover, resistance requires more complicated management systems and more labor and monitoring to manage (Habib et al. 2023).

Owners and vets can easily be affected psychologically as this should not be ignored (Steffey et al. 2023). This decreased confidence in therapeutic interventions poses a challenge to clinical decision making and can lead to the use of inappropriate therapeutic practices (Kothinti 2024). Educational programs are hence needed along with technical innovations to facilitate the Sustainable Solutions (Lv et al. 2022). This method of selective treatment is called targeted selective treatment and is being used sustainably (Periyasamy 2024). Treatment for parasite problems selectively has become a mainstay of parasite control in a sustainable program (Obeidat and Al-Najjar 2025). This approach takes the case-by-case basis when it comes to treatment as all horses are not treated alike; treatment is targeted to the individual(s) who are making the most significant contribution to environmental contamination (Hardefeldt et al. 2025). Egg shedding is consistently found to be small numbers of horses shedding a large percentage of the eggs (Elghryani et al. 2023b).

The regular testing of the feces usually accompanied by some predetermination of treatment thresholds (Overmars et al. 2022). Low egg counts horses are not treated, helping to maintain refugia populations and minimize selection pressure (Bechert et al. 2022). Selective treatment also reduces drug consumption and reduces the contamination to the environment (Murray et al. 2024). Two key components to being successful are owner education and maintenance and monitoring procedures (Chaurey et al. 2023). Because parasite burdens vary with time, it is necessary to repeat parasite evaluations because of individual differences in shedding (Ferreira-Sá et al. 2024). If integrated into broader management practices, this will further boost their long-term effectiveness (Alkhodary 2023).

Pasture and Grazing Management Strategies

Management of the pasture is one of the best and easiest non-drug management strategies (Rendle et al. 2024). Routine manure collection will significantly diminish environmental pollution and will help to break cycles of transmission (Jimenez et al. 2023). High frequency collections lead to more reduction in availability of larvae (Sardi et al. 2023). In rotational grazing reducing cumulative exposure is achieved because there is a natural reduction in infective larvae (Sands et al. 2024). Further, because some of the parasites common to an equine host are host specific, it is possible that contamination may be further reduced using mixed species grazing systems (Fleurance et al. 2022). Health and outcomes are better and the intensity of the contamination of the pasture lower when appropriate stocking densities are used (Villaverde et al. 2025).

The use of pastures for harrowing (WCH) is still a controversial practice as it is greatly affected by environmental conditions (Verdon 2023). Harrowing can spread infective larvae under optimum climatic conditions

and may not have a negative effect on their numbers (Osterman-Lind et al. 2022). Therefore, recommendations that are specific for the climate are needed (Ranius et al. 2023). Another important management aspect is the quarantine measures that need to be taken with newly introduced horses (Health et al. 2022). Diagnostic testing and targeted treatment, together with isolation, minimize the chances of introduction of resistant population of parasites into established herds (Antonopoulos et al. 2024).

Nutraceuticals and Plant-Derived Alternatives

An increasing problem with drug resistance has led to an enhanced interest in phyto-therapeutics and nutraceutical methods (Ashraf et al. 2023). Many of the compounds isolated from plants have antiparasitic effects, for example by interfering with the metabolism of parasites, disrupting the hatching of eggs, interfering with neuromuscular signaling and modulating host immune system (Shang et al. 2025). The condensed tannins have been a topic of great discussion as they could have a negative effect on larval development and reduce fecals (Besharati et al. 2022). Plants with high levels of tannins seem to have the ability to influence parasite establishment and fecundity and promote gastrointestinal health (Rodríguez-Hernández et al. 2023).

Saponins have membrane disruptive effects which could lead to a decrease in the survival of the parasites (Kholif 2023). On the other hand, flavonoids also have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that could have beneficial effects on the host resistance and may also have direct antiparasitic properties (Hamad 2023). Plants with aromatic properties are important sources of essential oils with the potential of demonstrating good in vitro activity against various stages of nematodes (Sarri et al. 2024). But compositional differences, bioavailability and safety concerns cause issues when moving to the clinic (Stielow et al. 2023).

Although promising compounds are available, there are many products available that are not clinically substantiated and have varying formulations (Thapa and Kim 2023). Optimization of the dose, safety evaluation and controlled field trials should be the focus of future studies (Fourie Zirkelbach et al. 2022).

Biological Control Approaches

Biological control provides environmentally friendly opportunities in the quest for parasite control (Lahlali et al. 2022). One of the most thoroughly studied ones is nematophagous fungi. Species that can collect and kill free living larvae will decrease the level of contamination and transmission (Berhanu et al. 2024). Fungal spores added to the feed survive and penetrate the intestinal tract to initiate activity in the feces which prevents activity on the larvae in development before spreading on the hay (Robi et al. 2023). Field applications of repeated use of the programs have shown reductions in infective larvae (Macedo et al. 2026). Other biological strategies involve manipulating dung beetle communities, and microbial antagonists which can interfere with parasite development (Boughton et al. 2024). Biological control is one of the aspects of integrated management that has potential but will require effort to implement, if there are no problems (Bueno et al. 2023).

Vaccines and Immunological Strategies

Vaccination is an extremely attractive long-term strategy as it may lead to a decrease in the need for multiple drug doses (Hausdorff et al. 2024). Despite this, the development of effective vaccines for nematodes is quite difficult because of the complexity of the antigen and the complex immune avoidance mechanisms in nematodes (Stear et al. 2023). The development of molecular biology and immunology has enhanced the identification of the current or potential larval antigens that are involved in larval invasion, feeding and/or reproduction (Jeria et al. 2023). It is also possible to increase efficacy with the use of multi-antigen vaccine targeting different life stages (Rajneesh et al. 2023). The other promising one is host-directed immunomodulation (Wallis et al. 2023). There is potential for complementing traditional control measures with nutritional interventions and/or microbial manipulation that can be shown to boost protective immunity (Collins and Belkaid 2022). Immunological research is still a key area of research that needs to be continued for future breakthroughs (Alsayb 2025).

Microbiome-Based Interventions

The microbial communities of the gut are vital to the host's immune system, nutrient usage and resistance to disease (Rastogi et al. 2022). Interactions within the parasite populations and with the microbial community can affect infection outcome, with emerging evidence for the effect of such interactions (Venter et al. 2022). Modulation of the microbial composition and/or suppression of the establishment of parasites and modification of immune responses, may be indirect, due to the presence of probiotics and prebiotics (Sardinha-Silva et al. 2022). Another possible strategy is to manipulate microbial metabolites, which also have potential to impact parasite fitness (Haider et al. 2025). Microbiome-based interventions are still a relatively new field, with new discoveries from the ever-evolving sequencing technology and systems biology studies on host-microbe-parasite interactions (Pallaval 2023).

Precision Parasite Management and Future Technologies

There are an emerging convergence of technological innovation and parasite surveillance and management (Parija and Poddar 2024). Digital monitoring systems with the integration of the different diagnoses from feces, environmental data and treatment histories aid in making individual decisions (Coman et al. 2024). AI algorithms could enhance the ability to predict risk of infection and/or optimal timing of interventions (Li et al. 2025a). However, there are other opportunities for precision management using remote sensing technologies that are able to assess the contamination of pastures and grazing behavior (Ogungbuyi et al. 2023). More advanced detection of disease could be achieved if behavioral changes, characteristic of parasitism, were detected using a sensor that was worn (Džermeikaitė et al. 2023). Technologies such as population sequencing and resistance marker surveillance offer opportunities for novel insights into parasite evolution via genomic approaches that are unparalleled (Vashisht et al. 2023). Incorporating such technologies into everyday practice

can have a significant impact on the sustainability of practices (Yavuz et al. 2023).

Integrated Parasite Management Framework

There will be no one single remedy for anthelmintic resistance (Marsh and Lakritz 2023). Effective control will need parasite management which involves parasite diagnosis, selective treatment, pasture management, alternative treatments and surveillance (Höglund and Gustafsson 2023). Programs should focus on evidence-based treatment decisions, on the conservation of refugia and on monitoring of the efficacy continuously (Phillips et al. 2026). It is necessary, as ever, for veterinarians and researchers, as well as horse owners and industry stakeholders to work together (Douglas et al. 2022). Educational activities are therefore key as they are essential for implementation success, assuming that the latter is dependent on behaviour change (Jakučionytė-Skodienė and Liobikienė 2022). With better understanding of resistance principles responsible drug use and sustainability can be encouraged (Muteeb et al. 2023).

Future Perspectives

Precision medicine, ecological sustainability, and multidisciplinary integration are key areas into which future control strategies will focus. Molecular diagnostics developed in recent years could allow for fast point-of-care resistance detection. Knowledge of the genome of parasites and host immunity could speed up vaccine development. With climate change comes now an added layer of complexity, changing the dynamics of transmission and distribution. Depending on the changing epidemiological circumstances, adaptive management systems that can adapt to shifting conditions will become more important. To maintain surveillance and data sharing and for the standardization of resistance monitoring procedures, international collaboration is still key. Ultimately the balance of effective disease control and maintenance of therapeutic resources are essential to sustainable parasite management.

Conclusions

Equine gastrointestinal nematode resistance is a significant problem that impacts equine health, welfare and productivity worldwide. The above may indicate that resistance is a broad community affair and point to the shortcomings of conventional concepts of parasite control, which have been used for decades. The need for sustainable management is to shift from blanket deworming to integrated management that includes diagnostics, targeted and judicious deworming, pasture management and refugia. Several emerging alternatives, such as phyto-therapeutics, biological control agents, manipulation of the microbiome, vaccines, and precision technologies offer new prospects for minimizing reliance on conventional drugs. But for the success of such implementation, there must be strong scientific validity and effective involvement of stakeholders. Future parasite control programs should focus on developing evidence-based approaches that combine both chemical and non-pharmacological measures but that can be modified to respond to changes and new threats in the parasite

resistance field. Preserving the effectiveness of anthelmintics and their long-term contribution to improving health in horses is still an attainable goal with the help of cross-disciplinary collaboration and sustainable management practices.

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Author's contribution

MAQ, AS: Conceptualization, supervision, funding acquisition; UUK, M: Data collection and Writing-original draft preparation; MUJ: reviewing and editing of the manuscript. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of this manuscript.

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