



## ADCA Topical vs. Oral Wormers

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There are a few things to consider when deciding on the right wormer to use on your cattle. Most topical/pour-on wormers are labeled for both internal and external parasites. The external parasites we're mainly concerned about are the sucking and biting lice that are mainly a problem during the fall and winter months. Any fly control that a pour-on wormer may provide really does not last as long as a specific fly control pour-on. I would recommend using a topical wormer in the fall, when you pregnancy check your cows and/or work your calves. This should take care of any lice and also lower the level of internal parasites going into winter, which in turn maximizes your cows feed efficiency during the cold months. It's important to do everybody at once, because most pour-ons will kill lice for 14 days, and any un-poured animal may re-infest the herd later on. The best time to use an oral or an injectable wormer is in the spring or early summer before you turn your cattle out to pasture. There is also a bit of a debate, that injectable dewormer may actually improve your conception rate if done a month prior to bull exposure. Another added benefit of deworming in the spring is that some products will actually kill fly eggs in the dung piles out on pasture- thus lowering the fly density. I'd recommend worming your cattle twice a year, alternating the drugs you use at least every three years. There are a lot of ivermectin wormer products out there with various names; your local veterinarian would be a great source for information on which product would work best in your herd. Depending on the fly problems in your area, you may need to use some type of fly control during the summer to help prevent pinkeye problems.

The future use of wormers in livestock will most likely become more challenging as we deal with drug-resistance in parasites. If sheep and goat parasites are any indication for what we'll see in the cattle industry, we may be in for quite a challenge. With that being said, we may need to rethink our management of parasites. The most ideal situation is rotational grazing- which requires frequent rotation before pastures are overgrazed. Also, "resting" a pasture for one year will help break the parasite life cycle. This may be difficult for some Dexter owners who do not own enough land, but even some additional fencing will help maximize the use of your grass and help prevent parasites from getting a strong foothold in your herd. Another important point, is that we follow the label directions on our wormers. The first step is to get an accurate estimate of your animal's weight, and if you need to- "round-up". Under-dosing can be ineffective and may also lead to resistance. Pay attention to the milk and slaughter withdrawals if you are milking or planning on butchering any steers in the near future. Most wormers have anywhere from a 30-50 day meat withdrawal, and only a few are approved for lactating cows. Also, it is important to note that some generics do not have any approved "adverse weather" application- but I would avoid using any pour-on when it's raining or there's a lot of snow on their backs. Contact your local veterinarian for their preference on the right wormers to use in your area.

Jeff Collins DVM

### Personal Paragraph:

My wife Kelley and I have four boys and live on acreage near Gary, SD. We bought our first Dexter heifers in 2007 and a couple cows in 2008. We enjoy the fresh milk and we're looking forward to trying Dexter beef in the future. I've been with the Clear Lake Veterinary Clinic for almost six years, and have the privilege of working with cattle everyday, both dairy and beef. We feel very fortunate and blessed to live where we do, and to be able to raise our own cattle.