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**“No standardized vaccination or deworming program is suitable for every horse.”**

## Aim for Individualized Disease Prevention

Routine vaccination and regular deworming are critical components in an equine health maintenance program. No standard vaccination or deworming program is suitable for every horse, so owners should develop individual programs with a veterinarian's assistance.

Vaccines are designed to prime the immune system for a quick response when a horse is exposed to an infectious agent and to help minimize the risk of infection. With your veterinarian's assistance, you can individualize a vaccination program for each horse based on factors such as age, sex, geographic location, use of the horse, pregnancy status, and risk of developing disease.

It's also important to remember that each horse's immune system will respond a little differently to vaccination. Not every horse will be protected to the same degree or for the same amount of time following vaccination. A primary series of the vaccines with booster doses will be required for an appropriate immune response before exposure to the disease. Your horse should be protected against the disease one to two weeks after a completed vaccine series. After the initial vaccine series, most horses will require annual or semi-annual booster vaccinations.

Establishing a deworming program for equine parasites has become a somewhat controversial topic. Due to the emergence of resistant parasites, the emphasis is shifting to prevention and control, rather than just routine rotational treatment with anthelmintics. Owners can use a fecal egg count reduction test to measure different dewormers' efficacy; this involves performing a fecal egg count before and after deworming. With your veterinarian's help, establish a program that works best for your horse and/or herd.

—Anne Couroucé-Malblanc, DVM, PhD, Dipl. ECEIM, WEVA Secretary, France