

# The importance of anti-parasitological treatment in hunting dogs.

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Parasite is the given name to organisms that feed on or in a host organism thus depriving the host organism of elements essential to its survival and well-being. In dogs we have both internal parasites and external parasites.

The internal parasites consist of worms (mainly tape and round worms) and the external parasites consist of ticks and fleas. Animals and essentially dogs get contaminated by all types of parasites through their entire environment (living and feeding conditions). Hunting dogs especially during and following the hunting season, after continuous outings in mountainous and countryside areas are more than liable to be severely contaminated with internal parasites. Two main types of internal parasites are the tape worms (flat in shape) and the ascarids (round worms) which are frequently found in the animals intestines. The adult parasite lives in the intestine and feeds off the intestinal contents and blood traces. This is equally where they will lay their eggs. The developing eggs enter the intestinal walls and are transported in a first stage to the lungs, then re-swallowed via the oesophagus thus re-infecting the stomach and intestines some will remain within the intestines and hatch into more worms other will be passed through the faeces resulting in a contamination of the particular area. A proper understanding of the entire life cycle of internal parasites allows us to fully acknowledge how severe a worm infestation really is.

The animal suffering from internal parasites could present the following symptoms :

**NONE – WEIGHT LOSS – WEAKNESS – ANEMIA – DIARRHOEA – VOMITING – UNHEALTHY COAT – DEATH**

Frequent anti-parasitological treatment with various medications are necessary to maintain a healthy animal. There is a wide variety of treatments that you can find at your local vet. It is advisable to carry out the treatment in January (right at the end of the hunting season), in the summer and of course in September (before the start of the hunting season).

It is equally necessary to repeat the initial treatment 3 or 15 days later, as some medication does not kill the parasites at certain developmental stages. For bitches in whelp and puppies the treatment cycle is somewhat different and will be discussed at a later stage.

Concerning the external parasites, ticks and fleas, severe problems are encountered more-so in our area of the world (eastern Europe) due to the hot and humid weather, which are ideal conditions for these parasite to multiply and survive. It is very easy to visibly see these parasites on the animals, but very difficult to rid them of an infestation.

Unfortunately these external parasites transmit various diseases to our animals, and in many a case these are serious and can be fatal. A simple example that happens to a large number of dogs is itchiness with continuous scratching. There is a visible discomfort and unrest of the animal, it will stop eating, become weak and pus filled crusts will form over the majority of the body.

Fleas also are a means of transmitting internal parasites such as the tape worm with all the incurring problems as mentioned earlier, and the risk of severe blood disorders such as erchiliosi and piroplasmiosi which again result in death.

It is for all these reasons that a dog owner must act responsibly and take special care to maintain not only a clean and healthy parasite free animal, but to equally provide a clean and parasite free living area for their dog, they must continuously spray the entire living area with insecticides. The dog should be promptly treated against parasite infections with the use of various treatments and collars that prevent the animal from bites which could result in more severe problems.

A monthly check up of the living areas and the dog is advisable. Always seek advice from your Vet as to what preventive and treatment measures should be carried out, as there is a vast quantity of treatments that are not always the best for your dog, and can be quite harmful. These shall be discussed in another article.