

P-A3.

PRELIMINARY STUDY ON GASTRO-INTESTINAL PARASITES IN GOATS AND SHEEP IN MAWALA AND DODANGOLLA UNIVERSITY LIVESTOCK FARMS

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Gastrointestinal nematode infection has been recognized as one of the major constraints to efficient goat and sheep production at Mawala and Dodangolla University Farms of Department of Animal Science. The recurrent costs of the goat and sheep units are very high due to the cost of the anthelmintic drugs, which are used for routine control of this infection. This epidemiological investigation on gastrointestinal parasitic infection was carried out in order to formulate a proper cost-effective chemoprophylactic programme for the control of gastrointestinal nematodes in these farms.

In this preliminary study, faecal egg counts (EPG), bodyweights, PCV, Hb concentration and faecal cultures were used to identify parasite species, pattern of natural gastrointestinal parasite infections and effect on goats & sheep in the farms. The meteorological data was obtained from the Natural Resource Management Centre of DOA. The animals were observed at regular intervals for a year beginning from May 1997. The high faecal egg counts have been shown in most of the animals through out the study. However the fluctuation of EPG count reflected the pattern of rainfall in the experimental area. All animals which epg more than 1000 were treated with anthelmintics.. This too corresponds to the pattern of rainfall in the area suggests that gastrointestinal nematode infection is related to the rainfall and subsequent pasture contamination in the area. A total of five genera of nematodes, *Haemonchus*, *Trichostrongylus*, *Bunostomum*, *Oesophagostomum*, and *Trichuris* (68%, 32%, 11%,85%,& 14% of the animal under study respectively) were found in the farms. Further, more one species of tapeworms (*Moniezia expansa* -13%) was also identified. Coccidia was one of the most common protozoan in the young animals (86%). This is an on going project under university *Research Grant No. RG/97/62/AG.*