

# Coccidiosis

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Coccidia are protozoal parasites that are resistant and non-responsive to anthelmintics (de-wormers) used for internal parasites. They are present in small intestines of all animals and are expressed mainly in confinement due to contamination of feed and water. Low humidity and high temperatures kill oocysts.

Coccidia destroy the epithelial cells of the mucous membrane of the small intestines which causes hemorrhage and leads to anemia and abnormal decrease of protein in the blood. Bacteria then penetrate the mucosa, clot the small blood vessels, and cause tissue death. The dead tissue sloughs into the small intestines which changes peristalsis and causes bloody diarrhea. Diarrhea leads to dehydration and eventually death.

Body temperature rises to 105 – 106 F in early stages and then returns to normal or subnormal from diarrhea. Animals can lose 5-15% of their body weight and secondary infection may set in. Coccidiosis can affect 10-50% of the flock with mortality reaching 10% or greater. If animals live, they may have permanent damage, cannot use feed efficiently, and gain slowly.

The best preventative measure is to protect feed and water from any kind of fecal contamination. The following coccidiostats can be used to prevent coccidiosis:

- Rumensin – 10-15grams/ton of feed
- Bovatec (Lasalocid) – 30 grams/ton of feed
- Deccox (Decoquinatate) – 1 milligram/pound body weight/day

Coccidiosis can be treated by using sulfa drugs and amprolium. Consult your veterinarian as to which products to use and how to use them.