

MENINGEAL WORM

The meningeal worm (*Parelaphostrongylus tenuis*) is a parasite of white tail deer. It rarely causes disease or any health issues in deer. However, when it infects an abnormal host, such as a sheep or goat (or camelid), the parasite crosses the blood-brain barrier and begins causing neurological symptoms that can be fatal. Sheep and goats become infected when they eat fresh forage that is either contaminated with infected snails or slugs or with their infected slime trail. The meningeal worm is also called the deer or brain worm.



Diagnosis

- Grazing history
- Symptoms
- Cerebrospinal fluid
- Response to treatment
- Necropsy

Symptoms

- Normal temperature
- Normal appetite
- Intense itching
- Hair loss (hot spots)
- Hind end weakness
- Incoordination
- Paralysis

Treatment (Vx)

- Early identification and intervention important
- Multi-day treatment
- High doses
- Fenbendazole (SafeGuard®) is the dewormer of choice.
- + Ivermectin (SQ) - ???
- Anti-inflammatory drugs
- Supportive therapy
- Salvage

Prevention

- Limit exposure to infected slugs, snails, and deer
- Prophylactic deworming not recommended
- No vaccine

SOME ANIMALS RECOVER ON THEIR OWN. SOME RECOVER WITH TREATMENT. SOME ARE PERMANENTLY DAMAGED.

The meningeal worm has an indirect life cycle. Land snails or slugs serve as the intermediate host.

