

Internal Parasites in Pigeons

Internal parasites can be divided into two groups, Nematodes and Cestodes.

Nematodes: they are called roundworms and within these are the Ascaris and the Capilaria. Ascaris are 2.5 to 6 cm long, the largest are the females, they have sharp ends and are yellowish white.

Capilaria: these measure 2.5 cm with a very fine diameter and are white in color.

These parasites lay eggs, these are consumed by the pigeon, they hatch in the intestine and between 3 weeks and 4 weeks they are laying eggs again and restarting the cycle.

How do these parasites harm our pigeons?

They cause damage to the intestinal wall, these lesions are colonized by pathogenic bacteria.

They release toxins that in some cases often cause neurological problems and intestinal pain.

Due to damage to the intestinal wall, absorption decreases.

They usually produce intestinal obstruction due to the formation of large bundles.

Weightloss.

In some cases they cause damage with hemorrhage and this blood is seen in the fecal matter, the cause of this is the Capilaria.

Ascaris usually migrate to the liver and cause hepatitis.

Diagnosis

It can be done in two different ways, a Visual where we find parasites on the floor or we perform a necropsy and see them in the intestine.

The other way is through a coproparasitological analysis, this is carried out in the laboratory through an analysis of floating the eggs in water supersaturated with salt. The eggs rise to the surface, stick to the coverslip, and are viewed under a microscope.

Treatment

There are many drugs that are used alone or in combination, which are very effective. The most used are Levamisole and Ivermetin but there are many more. My professional experience suggests me not to use Mebendazole and Febendazole due to their high toxicity (they mark the pen a lot).

Those lofts where the pigeons have access to grass or grass have to be dewormed more frequently than those found on the terrace.

It must be dewormed at least 2 times a year before the competitions begin and when the competitions end.

In the case of breeders, before the breeding season begins and when the breeding season ends.

Cestodes or Flatworms

The largest representative of this group is the tapeworm. These usually measure up to 25 cm formed by portions called escole.

The Tapeworm is closely related to pigeons that arrive lost from competitions. Why? Because for the tapeworm to develop in the pigeon, it must ingest an intermediate host (snail, earthworm, ant, fly) where the first stage of the tapeworm develops. Stray pigeons generally ingest snails where they become infected.

Diagnosis

Visual: the tip of the Tapeworm is usually seen coming out of the cloaca, this generally occurs when the pigeon makes a great physical effort which leads to an increase in peristalsis or through a necropsy.

Laboratory analysis: through a coproparasitological. Normally the fancier believes that only one is found but if the pigeon has consumed several snails there may be several.

Treatment

There are several drugs of choice, all with great efficiency, the most used are Leva misol, Praziquantel, Tin Dibutyrate, etc. The tapeworm greatly damages the intestinal wall and feeds on intestinal nutrients, causing weakening and emaciation in the pigeon.

FABIAN PORRINI

Veterinarian

Provincial Registration 395