



Endoparasites

Worms living in the intestines of chickens fall mainly into four categories.

Roundworms (Ascarids), usually 5 to 7 cm (2-3 inches) long.

Hairworms (Capillaria), only measure 1-1.5 cm long.

Caecal worms (Heterakis), usually 1.5 cm long.

Tape worms, usually 7 to 10 cm long, consisting of many small segments.

Vaccination to prevent coccidiosis is also possible

Clinical signs

Mature roundworms are not a major cause of the disease, but the larvae can damage the intestinal lining, causing enteritis, anaemia, decreased egg production and at times eggs with pale yolks.

Capillaria cause more damage to the intestinal lining and can cause enteritis and anaemia with decreased egg production and the appearance of pale egg yolks ("platinum yolks").

Caecal worms are found in the caeca and do not cause serious damage, except that their

eggs can transmit blackhead - mainly in turkeys (see blackhead, page 80).

Tape worms are infrequently found and do not cause serious damage, except that they use the nutrients of the host chicken.

Diagnosis

Examination of the intestinal contents will reveal roundworms, caecal worms, and tape worms without difficulty. Capillaria can usually be found when intestinal contents are washed through a fine mesh sieve.

Treatment and control

Roundworms and caecal worm infections can be treated with piperazine. Piperazine is not effective against tape worms and capillaria for which other anthelmintics are required.