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Management of Ticks and Worm Infestation in Cattle and Buffalo

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Ticks and worms are among the most common yet neglected enemies of cattle and buffalo health. These tiny parasites silently steal nutrition, weaken immunity, and reduce milk yield and growth rates. In severe infestations, they may even lead to death of young or weak animals. Effective control and prevention of these parasites are therefore essential for maintaining the health and productivity of dairy herds.

Ticks: Tiny Pests, Big Problems

Ticks are small, blood-sucking external parasites that cling to the animal's skin, especially around ears, dewlap, udder, and tail regions. They not only cause blood loss and irritation but also transmit deadly diseases such as babesiosis, theileriosis, and anaplasmosis.

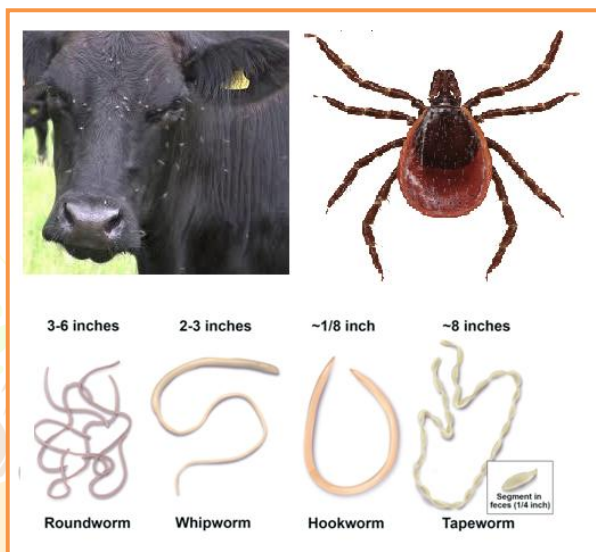


Fig. Ticks and different worms of cattle and buffalo

Effects of tick infestation

- Decreased appetite and milk yield
- Damage to hide and skin
- Transmission of tick-borne diseases
- Weakness and anaemia in severe cases

Preventive measures

Regular inspection: Check animals, especially in summer and monsoon, for ticks around ears, tail, and underbelly.

Chemical control: Use recommended acaricides such as cypermethrin, deltamethrin, or amitraz sprays/dips once every 2–3 weeks. Different commercial products such as No Tick, Tick Out, Tick Spray etc. are available.

Environmental control: Keep animal sheds clean, dry, and well-drained. Avoid grazing of animals in pastures having ticks. Rotate grazing pasture and keep a pasture not accessed by animals for one month to help dying of tick's larvae.

Biological methods: Neem-based or herbal sprays can be used as safer alternatives.

Vaccination: In some regions, anti-tick vaccines are being explored and can be promising tools in integrated control.

Worm Infestation: The Hidden Thieves

Worms (internal parasites) live in the digestive system or liver of animals and absorb nutrients from the feed meant for the animal. The most common are roundworms, tapeworms, and liver flukes.

Symptoms of worm infestation

Poor growth and weight loss
Dull coat and reduced milk yield
Diarrhoea or constipation
Swollen belly (pot-bellied appearance)
Anaemia and general weakness

Effective Deworming Strategies

Regular deworming schedule: Calves every 3 months; adults 2–3 times a year (before and after monsoon, before calving).

Right choice of anthelmintics: Use albendazole, fenbendazole, levamisole, or ivermectin as per veterinary advice.

Pasture management: Avoid overgrazing, rotate grazing areas, and dry out waterlogged fields.

Hygienic management: Regularly clean feeding and water troughs.

Fecal testing: Helps detect worm burden and select the most effective treatment.

Integrated Parasite Management (IPM): The Smart Approach

A combination of good management practices, timely treatment, and preventive measures ensures effective control of both ticks and worms.

Maintain cleanliness and hygiene in animal housing and grazing areas.

Provide balanced nutrition to improve natural resistance.

Follow a regular deworming and tick-control calendar.

Keep new or purchased animals isolated and treated before mixing with the herd.

Conclusion

Maintaining good health of animals is crucial for a successful dairy farm. Ticks and worms, though small, can silently erode profits by reducing milk yield, growth, and fertility. Parasitic infection is one of the major causes of poor health and productivity of farm animals. With regular inspection, good hygienic practices, and following proper veterinary guidance, farmers can easily prevent these parasitic infections. Remember, 'Prevention is always better and cheaper than cure.' Keeping your cattle and buffalo parasite-free ensures not only animal welfare but also better productivity and profitability.