

TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

To treat Summer Sores you will need to address both the inflammation in the skin, and the parasite in the stomach. The stomach parasite is the source of the infection, and is susceptible to Ivermectin or Moxidectin dewormer. Because the fly is carrying the larvae that infect the skin, and flies can live up to two months long, horses living on properties that are known to have Summer Sores should be dewormed at one month intervals 2-3 times throughout the summer. The best approach is to deworm all horses on the property at the same time each time, because a stomach infestation in one horse can cause a Summer Sore in another horse. In the skin, treatment is addressed at eliminating the inflammation and controlling flies. A paste we dispense as Summer Sore Cream is made up of nitrofurazone ointment plus fly repellent and a steroid, and is very helpful in reducing inflammation in the wounds. We can also inject a steroid directly around some wounds if they are in a location that makes injection possible. Some horses with very extensive inflammation may benefit from oral steroid treatment as well. Fly control is important in limiting future infections, and horses prone to ocular Summer Sores should wear a fly mask that is removed daily to check for sores underneath.

If you have any further questions or think your horse may be suffering from summer sores please give us a call at (530) 752-0292 and schedule an appointment.

Photos: Erin Ruminski

Illustrations: Erin McKerney

Text Reference: Pusterla, et al, Cutaneous and ocular habronemiasis in horses: 63 cases (1988-2002), JAVMA, Vol 222, No. 7, April 1, 2003.

Summer Sores

Cutaneous Habronemiasis



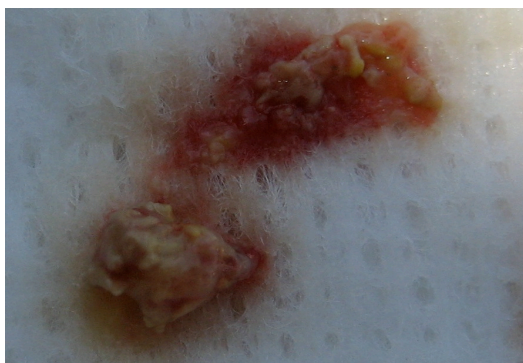
- Life Cycle
- Signs
- Treatment and Prevention

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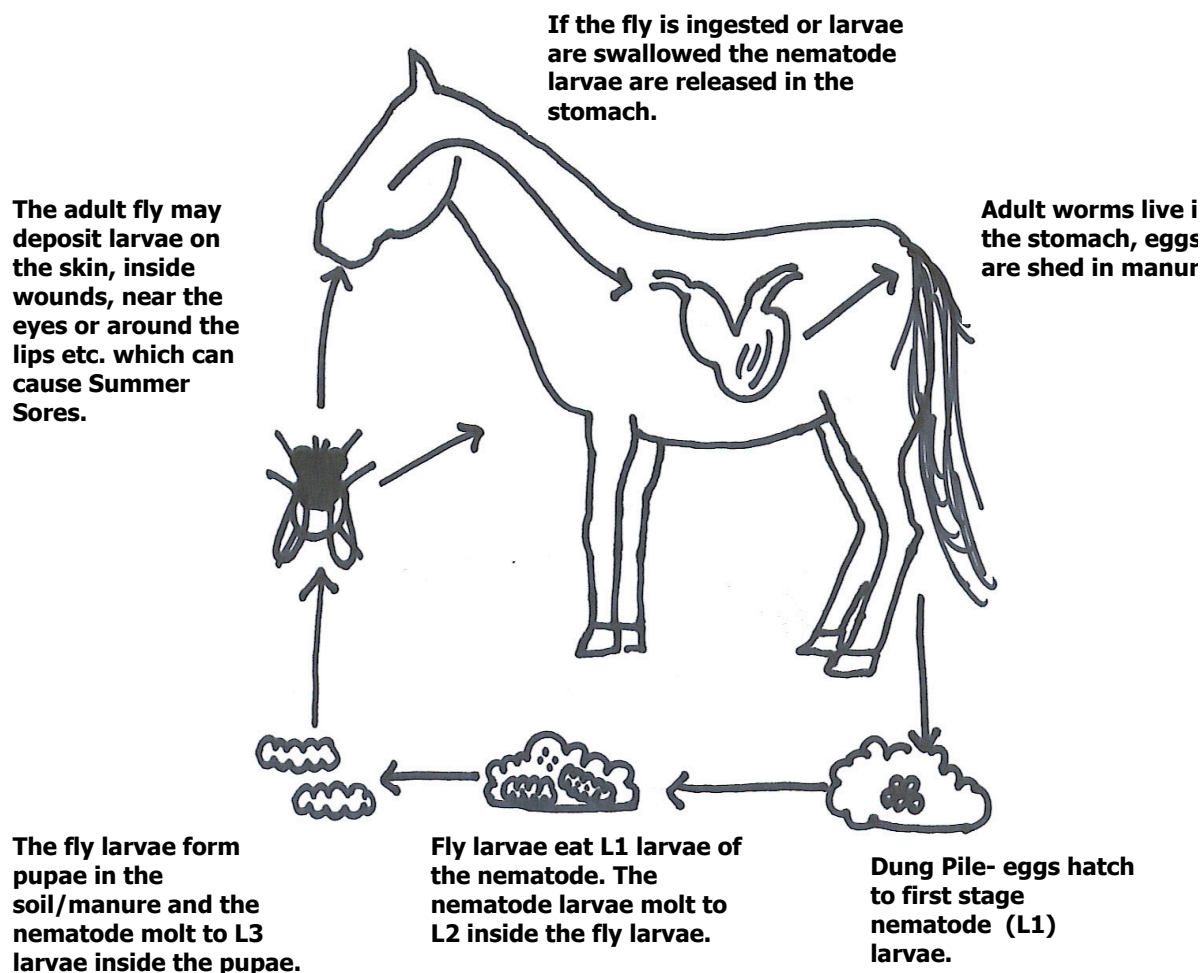
Dr. Sharon Spier (Chief of Service) and Dr. Joie Watson

WHAT ARE "SUMMER SORES"?

Summer Sores can occur in any breed or age of horse, mule, or donkey. Lesions typically appear on the skin or near the eyes, but are actually caused by a worm that lives in the stomach. The worms *Habronema muscae*, *Habronema microstoma*, and *Draschia megastoma* can each be the inciting cause of Cutaneous or Ocular Habronemiasis, the condition known as Summer Sores. When these worms are in the stomach they generally do not cause the horse significant internal disease, but they produce larvae that are passed through the digestive tract and end up in the horse's manure. These larvae are then picked up by flies. When a fly lands on an open sore or a mucous membrane such as at the corners of the eyes or the edges of the lips, they can deposit the larvae into the horse's skin. The larvae themselves will not develop into worms in the skin, but in some horses can create a very intense allergic reaction that causes a large amount of inflammation. This inflammatory reaction creates the summer sore. The sores will often be itchy and horses may try to rub or scratch the area, making it even more irritated and inflamed.



Sulfur granules from a summer sore



HOW TO RECOGNIZE SUMMER SORES

The most common sites for Summer Sores are around the eyes, the edges of the mouth, around the lips, external genitalia, and on the distal limbs, especially around the fetlocks and coronary band. The sores can happen anywhere on the horse but do commonly occur in areas where a wound or laceration has occurred. When caring for a wound in the summer months watch for development of granulation tissue, and swelling under the skin associated with a wound that is often itchy. Granulation tissue is moist, pink, irregular scar-like tissue that can develop and grow rapidly. Within the sore you may see some small, hard, yellow grains known as "sulfur granules"—these are not actually sulfur, but are a tissue reaction to the inflammation and are not always visible in the wound.