FAMACHA making great progress in the Americas

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FAMACHA maak groot vordering in die Amerikas

Jan van Wyk :

Die FAMACHA© beginsel, die vinding van Dr Faffa Malan, het groot hoop gebring in die wêreldwye stryd teen wurm weerstand wat reeds so erg geraak het dat wurmstamme op 'n groeiende getal plase in vele lande met die beskikbare wurmmiddels prakties onbeheerbaar geraak het. Nie slegs was dit sy idee om aan hand van die kleur van die oogslymvlies haarwurmbesmette skape se anemie status te probeer peil nie, maar was ook die senior werker in die eerste proef waarin die beginsel getoets is. Heel gepas is die woord, "FAMACHA" deur Prof. Gareth Bath na aanleiding van Dr Faffa se bydrae voorgestel - soos volg afgelei: "FA"ffa "MA"lan "CHA"rt. Nadat 'n kleurkaart vir die stelsel ontwikkel is, is dit wyd in Suid-Afrika getoets en uiters geskik bevind om diere te kan identifiseer wat nie sonder

dosering die mas teen haarwurmbesmetting kan opkom nie. Terselfdertyd is bevind dat die groot meerderheid van skape in 'n gegewe trop gewoonlik daartoe in staat is om sonder dosering die haarwurmdaging te behartig en dat dit dan heel prakties is om hierdie diere ongedoseer te laat, terwyl slegs die aangetasde diere behandel word. Nie slegs bespaar dit die boer geld nie, maar is ook 'n kragtige wapen om ontwikkeling van wurm weerstand teen die middels wat gebruik word, teen te werk.

Die finale bewys van die waarde van FAMACHA© is egter dat die gebruik daarvan besig is om wêreldwyd uit te kring, ten spyte van die feit dat niemand toegelaat word om dit aan te wend sonder dat hulle spesifiek opgelei is om dit doeltreffend toe te pas nie. Veral in die suidelike state van die VSA en in Brasilië word letterlik duisende boere en veeartse/voorligters opgelei en van die kaarte (wat almal in Suid-Afrika ontwikkel is en gedruk word) voorsien.

Ray M. Kaplan, DVM, PhD, DipEVPC
Associate Professor
Department of Infectious Diseases
College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Georgia:

The introduction of the FAMACHA system for the detection of clinical anemia in sheep and goats has been the singular most important advancement in the control of parasites in the United States. The reception and acceptance by sheep and goat producers has been extraordinary. Since FAMACHA was first introduced into the US by Dr. Adriano Vatta in 2003, more than 10,000 FAMACHA charts have been sold. It is also noteworthy that all of these charts were distributed only in conjunction with workshops where appropriate education and training on parasite biology, parasite control, and the integration of FAMACHA into parasite control programs were provided. To date more than 400 training workshops have been given in 34 (of 50) states + Canada + Puerto Rico + St. Croix USVI.. Thus, virtually all of the States in the USA where Haemonchus is viewed as a problem in small ruminant production have been part of this program. The only factor limiting further distribution in the US is the lack of a formal infrastructure to provide training opportunities. My laboratory has served as the central coordinating unit, but with few exceptions, training of farmers has occurred as a result of local demand and the commitment of a local or regional animal health professional who was first trained and then served as a trainer.

Marcelo Beltrão Molento
Presidente - XV Congresso Brasileiro de Parasitologia Veterinária Médico Veterinário, PhD Laboratório de Doenças Parasitárias Departamento de Medicina Veterinária Universidade Federal do Paraná, UFPR
R: dos Funcionários, 1540, Cabral
Curitiba, PR, Brasil:

In South America, the parasite Haemonchus contortus (wireworm) causes enormous losses on sheep and goat farms. The FAMACHA guide that was developed in South Africa after preliminary testing by Dr. Faffa Malan and others, of his idea, had shown the potential of the approach, and was introduced in Brazil early in 2000 and our group in this Country has trained more than 2600 field technicians, producers and Veterinary students. The FAMACHA is now incorporated under the Integrated System of Parasite Control (SICOPA) that was developed in Brazil to promote sustainability to resource poor farmers and is applied in the entire Country as well in many Universities.

The average reduction of anthelmintic treatment on farms using FAMACHA is close to 85%, which shows its enormous economic benefits to farmers, while at the same time preventing parasite outbreaks.We have conducted many experiments to validate FAMACHA in Brazil and the data is very encouraging regarding animal performance (weight gain and reproduction). We are currently running a very large extension project that promotes the usefulness of target treatment methodology (of which FAMACHA is the most important method) to 240 farmers that involves 33 thousand animals. On theses farms FAMACHA was performed more 100,000 times during 2006, with a reduction of 66% in anthelmintic treatment. The adoption of the FAMACHA method by farmers in the region provided an opportunity to qualify and create a new category of technical labor improving the sheep and goat cost/effective production. Technology transfer was well received by the farmers consolidating the diffusion of FAMACHA. Thus, I truly believe the FAMACHA system is essential for any small ruminant production farm in South America.