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Title: Seasonal prevalence of gastrointestinal helminths in sheep and goats of middle agro-climatic zone of Jammu province.

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Abstract

A total of 1920 faecal samples of sheep (960) and goats (960) of stationary flocks of the middle agro-climatic zone of Jammu province were examined, out of which 67.24 % animals were positive for helminthic infections. The different nematodes observed were strongyles (50.1 %), trichurids (12.1 %) and Strongyloides spp. (4.2 %). Trematode ova recorded were of amphistomes (8.3 %), Fasciola spp. (8.2 %) and Dicrocoelium spp. (5.4 %). No significant difference was observed between the infection level in sheep (68.54 %) and goats (65.94 %) which could be attributed to mixed grazing and sharing of pastures/sheds. Significantly ($p < 0.05$) higher infection was observed in monsoon as compared to winter. Strongyles were predominant during all the seasons, but significantly ($p < 0.05$) higher infection was observed in monsoon as compared to winter. Coproculture studies revealed that Haemonchus contortus (61.18 %) predominated during all the seasons, followed by Trichostrongylus spp. (13.67 %), Ostertagia spp. (12.17 %), Strongyloides spp. (4.14 %), Oesophagostomum spp. (3.84 %) and Bunostomum spp. (3.83 %). Eggs per gram of faeces (EPG) were the highest (sheep 1883.33 ± 117.6 and goats 1800 ± 110.21) during monsoon and the lowest during winter (sheep 640 ± 41.29 and goats 556.67 ± 33.01). Two peaks of EPG (the first in May and the second in August) were recorded during the 1 year study period. Infection was significantly ($p < 0.05$) higher in young (73.22 %) as compared to adults (61.25 %). Females showed a higher infection (73.33 %) as compared to males (61.14 %). The effect of prevailing agro-climatic conditions on the prevalence of gastrointestinal helminths has been discussed.

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