

## **The effects of anthelmintic treatments against gastrointestinal nematodes on the performance of breeding ewes and lambs on pasture in semi-arid Kenya**

C. J. Ngang'au<sup>1</sup>, N. Maingi<sup>1</sup>, P. W. N. Kanyari<sup>1</sup> and W. K. Munyua<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Veterinary Pathology, Microbiology and Parasitology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Nairobi, P.O. Box 29053, 00625 Kangemi, Nairobi, Kenya

C. J. Ngang'au

Email: [jchege@uonbi.ac.ke](mailto:jchege@uonbi.ac.ke)

Received: 16 May 2008 Accepted: 22 November 2008 Published online: 11 January 2009

### **Abstract**

The effects of anthelmintic treatments in controlling gastrointestinal nematodes in breeding ewes in a semi-arid area of Kenya were determined. The study carried out during two breeding seasons, between June 2000 and December 2001 where albendazole was administered to groups of ewes, 2 weeks before mating, 3 weeks to lambing and mid lactation indicated significantly lower nematode egg counts in treated than untreated groups of ewes. In the first breeding season, reduced rainfall resulted in pasture scarcity and weight loss in both groups of ewes through out the gestation period, but losses were higher for the untreated group. In the second season, both groups of ewes showed a steady increase in weight gain during the gestation period and post-partum, but weight gains were higher in the treated group. In lambs, weight gains at 6 weeks were higher for treated ewes than control groups, in both breeding seasons. The results of this trial indicate that anthelmintic treatments in breeding ewes in the study area are beneficial in reducing gastrointestinal nematode infections and improving performance of the ewes and their lambs. In addition to the treatments, breeding ewes should be given feed supplementation particularly during periods of pasture scarcity.

### **Keywords**

Anthelmintics, Gastrointestinal nematodes, Breeding ewes, Lambing weights, Weight gains