



FBCSA BC

Federation of Boxer Clubs of Southern Africa Breed Council



ASCARIDS (“ROUNDWORM”)

Ascarids are one of the most important worms in dogs. They feed on what has been ingested into the small intestines. The adult female worm is very fertile. A single worm produces 100 000 eggs per day. Eggs are very resistant and can survive and remain infective for years.

As in the case of hookworm, most mature otherwise healthy dogs can “cope” with an ascarid infection. Puppies on the other hand are very severely affected.

Symptoms of ascarid infestation in puppies

- Enlarged abdomen – pot-bellied
- Unthrifty
- Diarrhoea alternating with constipation
- Vomiting
- Occasionally nervous symptoms – convulsions
- Heavy infestations: obstruction of the intestine
- Obstruction can lead to bowel perforation

Life Cycle and routes of infection

The most important source of infection is pre-natal.

Larvae in the tissues of the **brood bitch** can remain there for years

- These dormant larvae are “released” and puppies are infected during foetal stages in the uterus. Larvae migrate to the liver of the pups and from there to the puppies’ lungs. After birth, the larvae continue their migration until they develop to adults in the intestines. 21-23 days after birth, the puppy is producing ascarid eggs. Bitches licking puppies during cleaning often become re-infected. This infestation can result in an ascarid infestation in the bitch.
- Oestrus may also trigger dormant larvae to continue their migration and development in the bitch herself. This may result in adult ascarids in the bitch from 3-4 weeks before whelp to 1-7 weeks after whelp.

In puppies infested before 21 days of age, the larvae often develop to adult. In infestations later than 5 weeks of age, the larvae often become dormant.

The bitch acting as a reservoir, and pups as a source of infection, combined with a complicated life-cycle and various routes of infection, make ascarid control difficult.