

iCatCare/ISFM Position Statement

Responsible use of parasiticides

Concerns have been raised about the risk of contamination of waterways by parasiticides commonly used in companion animals. As these products are harmful to a wide range of invertebrates, the impact that these can have on wildlife and ecosystems cannot be dismissed. iCatCare/ISFM supports the policy position and recommendations agreed by three



veterinary organisations in the UK (British Veterinary Association, British Small Animal Veterinary Association and British Veterinary Zoological Society) on the responsible

use of parasiticides:
www.bva.co.uk/media/4352/bva-bsava-and-bvzs-policy-position-on-responsible-use-of-parasiticides-for-cats-and-dogs.pdf

Position statements from ISFM and its parent charity International Cat Care provide a considered and accurate source of information on current and often controversial welfare issues. A complete list of position statements, all designed to help protect cats, is available at: icatcare.org/our-campaigns

While cats are likely to be lower contributors to environmental contamination by parasiticides because they are less likely to be bathed or to swim in waterways, efforts should still be made to reduce the impact they do have.

Key considerations for veterinary professionals

- ❖ iCatCare/ISFM recommend that an individual risk assessment is performed on all cats before parasiticides are prescribed and that this should be reviewed on at least an annual basis. Assessment should incorporate information about the individual cat including:
 - Outdoor access;
 - If the cat is indoor-only, whether it has contact with other animals that have outdoor access and what parasiticide regimen the other animals are on;
 - Hunting behaviour;
 - Diet;
 - Whether the cat lives in a house with young children or immunocompromised individuals;
 - Whether the cat suffers from flea allergic dermatitis;
 - Whether there is seasonal risk;
 - Where the cat toilets.
- ❖ Consideration should be given to the type of product prescribed; for example, single ingredient vs multi-ingredient and the route of administration.
- ❖ Where a topical medication is being given, owners should be advised on how to apply this to reduce contamination to the wider coat and to the physical environment.

Key advice for cat caregivers

- ❖ Bathing cats is not necessary (unless for a specific medical problem).
- ❖ Apply topical parasiticides correctly; for a demonstration video, visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKIm-wGV2TUh.
- ❖ Where topical parasiticides are being used, covering the cat's bedding with a disposable cover until the medication is dry reduces the risk of parasiticides getting into the wastewater when the bedding is washed.
- ❖ As some parasiticides may be excreted in the cat's urine or faeces, dispose of the litter appropriately in rubbish bins to avoid wastewater contamination. Providing outdoor toilet areas away from water courses in a garden will also help to reduce the risk of contamination.
- ❖ Seek advice from a vet to assess each cat's risk and need for parasite control rather than using 'over the counter' products from a pet shop or supermarket.