

## PREVALENCE OF GASTROINTESTINAL PARASITES OF GOATS (*Capra hircus*) IN KURUNEGALA DISTRICT

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Gastrointestinal (GI) helminth infection, having the largest clinical and economic impact on sheep and goat production, becomes a major constraint on goat production in tropical countries. Study was conducted to investigate the prevalence of GI parasitic infections of goats in Kurunegala District. A questionnaire survey collected the data on goat farms located in Galgamuwa, Rasnayakapura, Maho, Kobeigane, Nikaweratiya and Pannala Divisional Secretariat (DS). Data revealed that 60% of the farmers had permanent goat housing systems while rest (40%) of the farmers had temporary goat housing systems. Eighty two percent of farmers used anthelmintic drugs to control GI parasites and 54% used drugs in 3 month intervals and 28% in 6 month intervals. Faecal samples were collected from 935 goats representing indigenous and crossbred goats to determine significance of the prevalence of GI parasites by using McMaster egg counting technique. A significant prevalence of GI parasites of goats ( $p < 0.005$ ) was noted. The GI parasitic burden was classified, based on the number of eggs per gram of faeces; 544 animals in 68% of farms resulted a low to moderate parasitic burden (0-1000 eggs) and 391 animals in 32% of farms resulted high parasitic burden (>1000 eggs). Six species of GI parasites were found in faeces; *Haemonchus contortus* (63%), *Oesophagostomum columbianum* (20%), *Nematodirus spathiger* (3%), *Moniezia expansa* (4%), *Moniezia benedeni* (2.5%) and *Coccidia* (7%). The class-wise infection rate of GI parasites was 85.88%, 6.55% and 6.88% for nematodes, cestodes and protozoa (*Coccidia*) respectively.

**Key words:** Cestodes, Goat, Nematodes, Prevalence, Protozoa