

# *Trichostrongylus axei*

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## Stomach hairworm

**Description:** The adult worm is small (0.5 centimeter long) and hair like.

**Predilection sites:** Stomach glands, small intestine.

**Geographic distribution:** Widespread in the US.

**Life cycle:** *Trichostrongylus axei* has a direct life cycle typical of nematodes. Larvae develop to infectivity on pasture in 4 to 6 days under optimal conditions of temperature and humidity.

**Significance:** The stomach hairworm is important primarily in contributing to burdens of mixed worm species.

**Clinical effects on host:** *Trichostrongylus* is usually part of a mixed infection, so its results are additive. The hairworm irritates and erodes the villi of the gut, damaging the capillaries and lymph vessels within these structures and causing blood loss into the gut. Parasite-induced trauma to the intestinal lining results in characteristic dark, foul-smelling diarrhea. Blood loss can cause anemia, edema, and rapid loss of condition.

**Diagnosis:** Larvae can be identified by fecal culture – the small egg is not identifiable by species.