Cyathostomum spp, *Cylicocyclus* spp, *Cylicodontophorus* spp, *Cylicostephanus* spp, *Triodontophorus* spp

Small strongyles

Description: These worms range from 4 to 26 millimeters in length.

Predilection sites: Colon and cecum.

Geographic distribution: Common throughout the US.

Life cycle: The life cycles of the small strongyle species are similar and follow the direct pattern typical of nematodes. There is a period of larval development within the intestinal mucosa.

Significance: Small strongyle infections must be controlled, since they can play a part in the animal's susceptibility to infection with other parasites that are more clinically significant. It is important to note that several species of small strongyles have an inherited resistance to some benzimidazoles. However, resistant species are susceptible to ivermectin and several other anthelmintics.

Clinical effects on host: Small strongyles are usually seen in mixed infections. Damage is mainly due to the activities of the adult worms in the colon. However, larvae within the gut walls can also suck blood. Like large strongyles, small strongyles are plug feeders that ingest plugs of intestinal mucosal tissue and capillaries. The mouths of small strongyles are smaller than those of large strongyles; thus, plug feeding by small strongyles results in less damage to underlying blood vessels. Diarrhea, anorexia, colic, and weight loss are signs of heavy infections.

Diagnosis: Eggs passed by foals up to 6 months old can be assumed to be those of the small strongyles, since the prepatent periods of the large strongyle species are longer than this. Species identification is impossible based solely on egg morphology. Larval differentiation is possible through specialized procedures such as fecal culture.