

# IDENTIFYING THE THREE THIEVES:

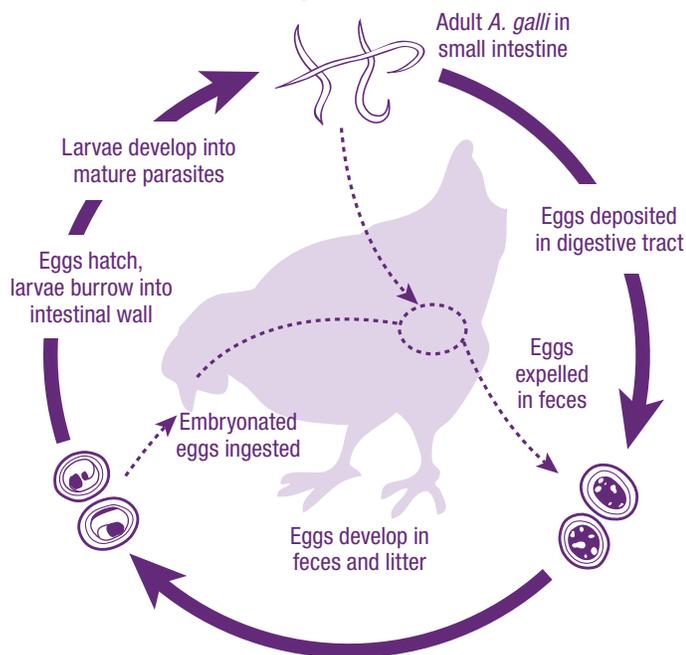
## Large roundworms

*Ascaridia galli*: Large, white, smooth worm approximately 5-12 cm long.<sup>1</sup>

### Life cycle<sup>2</sup>

- Worm eggs pass from the chicken via feces, moving on to the litter where they embryonate—often within 5-10 days.<sup>2</sup>
- While all worm eggs are hardy, the roundworm eggs are particularly protected from the environment.
- The bird ingests the eggs and they hatch in the proventriculus and duodenal loop; larvae then live free in the lumen for the first 9 days before penetrating the mucosa of the small intestine.
- Immature worms return to the lumen within 17 days; the worms reach maturity by 30 days of age.
- The prepatent period of the roundworm is 35-45 days.

### Roundworm life cycle



### Signs and clinical significance<sup>1</sup>

The greatest intestinal damage is in young birds due to larval migration.<sup>1</sup> In severe cases weight loss, diarrhea and reduced nutrient absorption have all been attributed to roundworms.<sup>2,3</sup> Death in young birds can also occur due to intestinal blockages.<sup>1</sup> In breeders, decreased egg production may occur if the challenge is heavy in the breeder house or if exposure did not occur in the pullet house, as immunity may develop after prolonged exposure of 3 months or greater.<sup>1</sup>

### Diagnosis

Clinical signs may be suggestive of parasitism. Confirmed diagnosis is made by visual examination of the worm in the small intestine. Worms may vary in size depending on the stage of development within the intestine.

Elanco Animal Health

2500 Innovation Way  
Greenfield, IN 46140



1-800-428-4441  
www.elanco.us

<sup>1</sup> Saif, Y. 2003. Diseases of Poultry 11th Edition: 943-948.

<sup>2</sup> Brewer, R. and Edgar, S. 1975. "Control of the Large Roundworm in Broilers." The Practicing Nutritionist. 9.3: 18-20.

<sup>3</sup> Savage, T. 2008. "Internal Parasites." University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. <<http://extension.unh.edu/Agric/AGDLEP.htm>>.

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