

The Face (and body) of Sarcoptic Mange

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Sarcoptic mange is caused by a parasitic microscopic mite that lives within the skin, boring a trail underneath the surface, laying eggs and then eventually dying. The eggs hatch. The larvae make their way to the surface of the skin and grow into adults. Females then bore into the skin and begin the life cycle again. This causes secondary infections and overwhelms the immune system. Death results, from a slow and tortuous process.



IF YOU SEE THIS NEAR YOUR STABLE OR IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD – YOU CAN CURE IT.

As “horse people” we find we are often really “animal people” and we are concerned with the health and wellness of all of the creatures that we come across. Recently, my path crossed with not one mangy fox, but two, that lived within my neighborhood. Due to their condition and inability to hunt, they had become dependent on scraps and handouts thrown to them from my neighbors. Driving home one day I witnessed a neighbor feeding the fox. My first thought was it had to be euthanized or treated. I chose to look into the latter. Contacting the Wildlife Rescue I was told if I could catch the fox they could treat it. Not wanting to waste precious days in trying to only trap, I began to research how to treat these animals. The treatment, although simple, would be time consuming. Two months of time. Along with a fellow animal loving neighbor, Paula, we decided to dedicate our days to the foxes, concentrating first on medication administration and second, potential trapping. The picture above is one of them taking their first dose – on Easter Sunday. The photo to the right is her 5 weeks later. Her sister is showing the same results and due to our dedicated efforts and successful rate of in the field medication administration – they no longer need to be trapped. If you find a fox in this condition and want more information on how to help, feel free to contact me at familybeardsley@yahoo.com

THE CURE

An off label use of Ivermectin injectable for cattle and swine. It is given to foxes in food and eaten, not injected.



Sarcoptic mange is a skin disease caused by infection with the *Sarcoptes scabiei* mite. The mites are microscopic and cannot be seen by the naked eye. Female *Sarcoptes* mites burrow under the skin and leave a trail of eggs behind. This burrowing creates an inflammatory response in the skin similar to an allergic reaction. The motion of the mite in and on the skin is extremely itchy, as is the hatching of the eggs. This creates further allergic reaction and more itching, loss of sleep and reduced immune response. Loss of fur, scaly skin and a general unthrifty appearance results and is characteristic of a Sarcoptic mange infestation. The condition worsens as skin infections set in. The fox's immune system then becomes even more compromised and internal parasites (tape, hook and round worms) begin to take over and absorb any nutrients that fox may find. Mangy foxes are usually starving in the late stages.

These foxes are not a threat to people, dogs, cats, etc. They are close to people and buildings because there may be easy food such as cat or dog food left out in dishes, bird seed, garbage, insects, worms, road kill and a mouse or two. They are also losing their ability to thermoregulate and need protection from wind, shade, sun, whatever the present need of the body is. Mangy foxes (and coyotes) often seek out a pile of hay to lay in. Hay seems to relieve the itchiness and provide a source of comfort.

Sarcoptic mange is treatable if the animal is treated in time before the process of organ failure begins. The drug of choice is inexpensive and easy to obtain. Although it is an "off-label use" according to the FDA, Ivermectin injection for cattle and pigs is a very effective cure for Sarcoptic mange in foxes. This injectable solution works orally and can easily be slipped into food. The ivermectin also treats a lot of the intestinal worms and any ear mites. The catch is this: it kills the mites living on the skin but doesn't kill the eggs. These eggs will hatch and reinfect the fox, so it has to be administered many times to kill the mange mites that hatch after treatment

Above information taken from:

http://foxwoodrehab.typepad.com/my_weblog/2007/10/treating-sarcop.html

Sarcoptic Mange – The Details

- Caused by a microscopic mite
- Lives within the skin
- Females bore a trail in the skin, laying eggs and defecating as they go
- Eggs hatch and larvae live on the skin and grow into adult mites
- The actions above cause intense itching from an immune inflammatory response
- Scratching often leads to open wounds and secondary infections
- Characteristic hair loss, scaly-raised - thick skin and an overall scruffy appearance results
- The immune system becomes overwhelmed
- Internal parasites; such as hook worms and tape worms, increase and consume what little nutrients the animal is able to ingest, leading to starvation and end stage organ (kidney/liver) failure and death

*Note: Foxes are *not* nocturnal. It is normal to see them during the day.

Dosing:

The medication needs to be administered ideally – once every three days for three weeks, then once every five days for at least 5 weeks total. (This is why trapping may be necessary.)

*The dose amount was omitted intentionally as there are certain precautions to be aware of when administering this medication. Discussion of which, is beyond the scope of this article.