

# Broodmare and Foal Care

This is a busy time of year and it is easy to overlook timely preventative medicine for your mare or foal. The following is a brief outline of some important health care recommendations.

## Broodmare Care

### **Vaccination-**

If your mare(s) was successfully checked in foal this spring, many are now 5-7 months along in gestation. An additional pregnancy exam is recommended to confirm her status. If still pregnant, vaccination for rhinopneumonitis is warranted to prevent this viral disease which is the leading cause of infectious abortion in horses. Horses become latently infected with this virus when they are young. Like many other herpes viruses, it can become active again during times of stress and injure the fetus. Thus even mares kept away from other horses need to be protected. Rhino vaccination with a killed product approved for pregnancy should be done during the 5th, 7th, and 9th month of gestation. In addition, mares should be boosted with vaccines for encephalitis, tetanus and influenza approximately one month prior to foaling.

### **Deworming-**

Most commercial deworming products are safe to use during pregnancy. If you are doing strategic deworming based on fecal egg counts, it is important to perform fecal examinations several times during pregnancy. Otherwise, maintain her on an interval deworming program appropriate for your pasture environment. Paste deworm every 2-3 months with the last administered 4-6 weeks prior to foaling.

### **Nutrition-**

Maintain good weight during pregnancy through the winter months, feeding quality hay and feed concentrates when needed. Trace mineral supplementation is especially important for gestating mares. Provide a supplement that includes 2-3 mg of selenium per day.

### **Artificial Lighting-**

If you plan on re-breeding in 2012, starting artificial lights in December enhances early fertility in the breeding season by shortening the transition estrous period. 60 days of 14-16 hours of total light is required in both pregnant and open mares to achieve the desired affect. Light should be bright in all four corners of the stall.

### **Dentistry-**

Routine preventative dentistry is recommended for all horses especially during winter months. Although it is preferred to float brood mares while they are open, it is safe to perform general dentistry during the middle stages of pregnancy. Good dental health helps improve lactation after foaling.

# Foal Care

## **Vaccination-**

The protection to the foal from colostral antibodies absorbed at birth begins to fade at 10-16 weeks of age, leaving your foal susceptible to several diseases. Vaccinations for tetanus, Eastern/ Western, West Nile encephalitis and rhinopneumonitis should begin at 4-5 months of age and repeated a month later. The most common respiratory infection in foals is rhino. Vaccination for influenza is no longer recommended for young foals and should not be started until 9-11 months of age.

## **Deworming-**

Foals are inherently more susceptible to parasites and especially round worms than adults. Deworming with paste should start at 4-6 weeks of age and be repeated at this interval until one year of age. Alternatively foals may be dewormed continuously with a feed through dewormer in their creep feed (pyrantel pamaote or Strongid C 2x).

## **Nutrition-**

Foals begin to creep feed naturally at several weeks of age. Generally they require higher protein feeds (typically 14-15%). All major feed manufacturers have specially formulated brood mare and growing foal rations. Calcium/phosphorous ratios are especially important in foal nutrition to promote proper growth and skeletal development. Blended hays including alfalfa help provide additional calcium and protein.



*For further information regarding mare and foal vaccinations you may go to the link provided, American Association of Equine Practitioners website-  
[http://www.aaep.org/vaccination\\_guidelines.htm](http://www.aaep.org/vaccination_guidelines.htm)*

*If you have any questions about your mare or foal regarding their preventative health care status please contact our office at (541) 895-5665*