

## February 2024 Newsletter

For those considering putting their mare in foal this season this is just a brief overview of what you should be thinking about at the start of the season.

### What do I need before I breed from my mare?

It is important to maintain your mare in good health by keeping her up to date with her vaccinations, worming, farriery, dentistry, maintain her in Good Body Condition and provide her with a balanced diet with vitamins and minerals.

Older mares are more likely to struggle to be put in foal, to carry a foal and to support a foal once it has been born. Putting a mare in foal when she is younger before waiting for her competition career to be over is ideal.

You may also need to do different pre-breeding tests before sending her to stud. It is also advisable to have an initial veterinary exam so we can evaluate the conformation of her vulva, her vagina and cervix using a speculum. And undertake an ultrasound examination of the uterus and ovaries carried out internally through the rectum. It is also important to identify any health problems. Some of which may exclude your mare from being a potential broodmare.

### What tests do I need to do to my mare before I can send her to stud?

The tests your mare will need to undergo will depend on the stud you wish to send her to. It is very important that you check with the stud in good time before you want to cover her. These tests need to be performed after the 1<sup>st</sup> January the year you intend on covering her (some of the tests may need to be done closer to when she is going to stud depending on their requirements).

### Does my mare have to go away to be covered?

No instead you can go down the route of artificial insemination. Artificial insemination is the process of collecting sperm cells from a male animal and manually depositing them into the reproductive tract of a female. It can either be fresh, chilled or frozen. It has some advantages from natural covering in that your mare can stay at home and that it removes the physical risk of natural covering. However, it can also require several ultrasound scans as timing needs to be more accurate (particularly with frozen AI). The success rate with frozen AI is also slightly lower than with either chilled AI or natural covering. Thoroughbreds can also not be raced if they have been produced by AI. Whether to choose AI or natural covering will depend on what you want to breed and your particular set up.



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### When should I send my mare to stud?

This is very individual, some studs will offer walk in, which is where we scan the mare to make sure she is at the correct point in her season to be covered and then she goes and is covered that day and immediately comes home. They may have her liveried there for a few days over her season or they may be happy to livery her there until she comes into season and then send her home either once she has been covered or once she has been scanned in foal. The different options will incur different costs so it is important to discuss them with the stud prior to sending your mare.

### What is the difference between frozen and chilled semen?

Frozen semen can be stored at the practice pretty much indefinitely in liquid nitrogen and is then ready for whenever we might need it, where as chilled semen has to be ordered and collected and shipped to us when the mare is ready (this can prove interesting with bank holidays etc, particularly if coming from abroad). Frozen semen may have been collected and stored from previous years so can be from stallions that have now passed away or been gelded. On the other hand chilled semen has a slightly higher success rate and needs slightly less accuracy in terms of timing of insemination around ovulation. Some stallions are only available by either chilled or frozen semen. Thoroughbreds bred using artificial insemination can not be registered to race.

### What extra should I do for my mare whilst she is pregnant?

Your mare will require additional vaccinations whilst pregnant including Influenza as normal, EHV: 3 vaccinations potentially required depending on your set up (5th month, 7th month and 9th month of pregnancy) and tetanus a month before delivery. During pregnancy it is important to provide a balanced diet throughout pregnancy- only increasing quantities in last 3 months, maintain foot care, worm egg count every 3 months and give ivermectin for high risk of worm burden at 10 months.

### What pregnancy scans are needed?

Pregnancy scans are highly recommended particularly at day 16 for twins and at 30-35 days for a heart-beat. Later scans can be used for sexing the foetus or evaluating for possible issues such as placentitis but are not always necessary.

## Practice News



Congratulations to Bryony Marshallsay, one of our wonderful nurses who successfully passed her exams at the end of 2023 to become a qualified veterinary nurse.

Congratulations to Sid Miller for winning our recent competition on how to entertain your horse during the winter months, kindly sponsored by Audevard.

Keep an eye for our upcoming client evenings which will be taking place through out 2024!

Don't forget to follow us on facebook and Instagram for the latest practice news and information.