



CSU FOALING SHORT COURSE

Press Release

June and Wendell Ayres gripped the foaling straps tightly. "Pull at the same time." "Alternate one leg and then the other, walk the foal out." Crouching in the straw of the stall, they kept the tension on the straps around the front legs and followed the directions. Slowly, the legs emerged, followed in a rush by the rest of the calf. "Well done," said the instructor. "Calf?" "Instructor?"

June and Wendell Ayres were participants in the first foaling short course offered by Colorado State University in January of 2009. Forty participants from around the country attended this one-of-a-kind course. Dr. Pat McCue, director of the Equine Reproduction Laboratory, came up with the idea of a course that would help horse owners learn to recognize when a foaling was normal and when to recognize when they needed help. "It is not a course to teach horse owners to do the work of their veterinarian," said McCue, "But a course to teach owners and foaling personnel what they can do to help during a foaling, and more importantly, what situations require the assistance of their veterinarian."

During the course, attendees were able to put information they received in classroom sessions to work. Using metal framed "phantoms" that contained a large vinyl bag, the simulated "mares" had a calf within their "uterus." A series of calves that had been

stillborn at birth had been collected from regional dairy farms and saved for this event. This made the lab work much more realistic without the pressure of a mare actually in labor. The zippered bag could be opened and the calf put into various positions. Each person rotated through various situations where they had to determine the position of the "foal," and whether it was normal or abnormal and describe what should be done. Everyone had many opportunities to experience a variety of normal and abnormal foaling scenarios.

Some foaling situations, like a simple elbow lock, may be resolved by trained personnel, as June and Wendell demonstrated. "I sure wish I had been able to take a course like this last year when I had a 140 lb. foal!" remarked June. "It was a difficult foaling and we could have really used the information we gained from this course." June and Wendell, who live in Colorado Springs, breed Gypsy Cobs.

The second day of the course covered laboratory tests to predict foaling, labor alert devices, colostrum evaluation, antibody (IgG) testing in foals, placental evaluation, routine care of the newborn foal and birth resuscitation.

DiAnn Langer of South Carolina has just opened a new farm where she will be breeding warmbloods. "The hands-on

aspect to this course was fantastic,” she said. “The veterinarians in my area actually encouraged me to attend this course.” There were people involved with many different horse breeds and all levels of expertise, from beginners who had never foaled out a mare to veterinarians who were looking to polish up their foaling skills.

For more information, contact the Equine Reproduction Laboratory at Colorado State University:

www.cvmb.colostate.edu/bms/ERL