



GET PREPARED NOW FOR FOALING IN JANUARY

Press Release

Foals start arriving in January, therefore having all of your equipment organized and ready to go is a good December project. There are basic supplies that are important to have on hand for foaling mares and should be in a kit or box readily available at the foaling stall. The following are recommended:

- ❖ Phone number of veterinarian posted at stall or telephone in barn.
- ❖ Thermometer – for evaluating body temperature of mare and/or the newborn foal.
- ❖ Stethoscope – evaluation of heart rate and respiration rate of mare and/or newborn foal.
- ❖ Scissors – multiple uses, including potential need to cut open placenta in "red-bag" birth, cutting umbilical tape or tail wrap or, in rare cases, cutting umbilical cord.
- ❖ Flashlight (with fresh batteries) – provide light source in dark stall or paddock.
- ❖ Tail wrap – keep tail hair away prior to and during foaling.
- ❖ Obstetrical sleeves (sterile) – used if needed to check position of fetus.
- ❖ Obstetrical lubricant (KY®, etc.) – applied to sleeve prior to checking of fetus.
- ❖ Exam gloves (2 pairs) – general-purpose non-latex gloves for washing mare prior to foaling, handling placenta, etc.
- ❖ Liquid soap (Ivory®) – used to wash genital area of mare and udder prior to foaling.
- ❖ Umbilical tape or clamp – used to tie off the umbilical cord immediately after foaling if needed.
- ❖ Umbilical cord disinfectant (Chlorhexadine diluted 1:1 with water) – used to dip the umbilical stump to disinfect and reduce probability of bacterial infection. Place in wide mouth small container with cap.
- ❖ Towels – to dry off and stimulate respiration in newborn foal.
- ❖ Catheter-tip syringe (60 ml) – used as a dose syringe for oral medications to foal under instruction or supervision of a veterinarian if necessary.
- ❖ Nylon cord/hay twine – used to tie placenta above hocks of mare after

foaling; prevents mare from stepping on and tearing membranes.

- ❖ Enema (sodium-phosphate-type) – administered to newborn foal at 1 to 2 hours of life to prevent or treat meconium impaction.
- ❖ Drawstring plastic bag – used for disposal of placenta.

Other equipment that may be optional, depending on your farm's foaling protocol is listed below:

Some farms test foaling mares prior to foaling for antibodies to other equine red blood cells that could cause neonatal isoerythrolysis (jaundiced foal syndrome). Equipment needed would include syringes, needles, blood tubes, transfer pipettes, screw top vials, styrofoam mailing kits and relevant forms. Please consult with your veterinarian about this test.

Farms that test the mare's colostrum for quality might stock a colostrum refractometer (i.e. a Brix or sugar refractometer) in their foaling box. This is a good test to identify potential cases of failure of passive transfer due to poor colostrums quality before they occur.

A large 20-ounce measuring cup for collecting colostrum for freezing and plastic bottles for storing frozen colostrum would be helpful. Cotton gauze 4 x 4's are useful for straining the colostrum to remove dirt and debris. There are also commercial mare milking kits available.

Those who test the mare's milk calcium prior to foaling should have a milk calcium test kit on hand and small plastic cups for milk collection as well as a supply of de-ionized water.

Foals should have their blood tested between 12 and 24 hours of birth to determine if they have received adequate passive transfer of antibodies from the mare's colostrum. An on-farm Snap Test is available for farms that do this procedure themselves. Veterinarians can also perform this test for mare owners. Consult with your veterinarian regarding the optimal time to test and types of tests available.

If a veterinarian is a long distance from the farm, some farms keep a portable foal resuscitation device (i.e. an Ambu-bag with nose cone) on hand in case the foal has difficulty breathing immediately after birth.

It is strongly recommended you meet with your veterinarian to determine what equipment is right for your foaling situation and that you are familiar with when and how to use the equipment. In the excitement of the foaling process, the organizing and homework you do now will pay big dividends come January.

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