

FOALING CHECKLIST

& INFORMATION



PRE FOALING

Mare Preparation

- ☐ Good plane of nutrition and body condition score
- ☐ Vaccinations (EHV at 5, 7 & 9 months, tetanus 4-6 weeks before foaling)
- ☐ Removal of caslicks 3 weeks prior to foaling
- ☐ Up to date with farriery, worming and dentistry

Foaling Environment

Prepare a clean and spacious environment for the mare to foal:

- It should be in close proximity so that you can quickly access overnight
- The mare should be moved to the environment 2-4 weeks prior to build antibodies to pass onto the foal in her colostrum

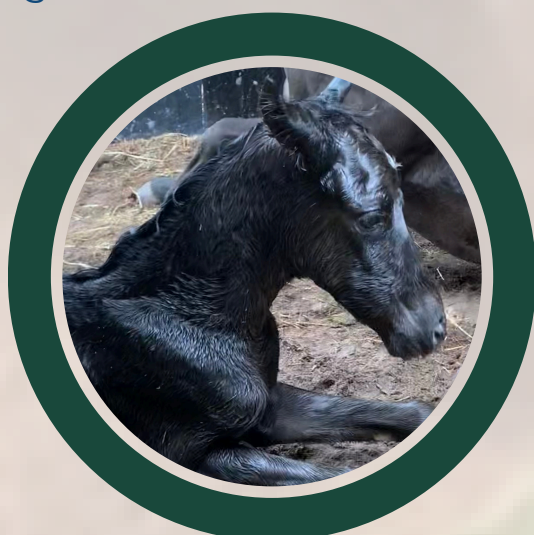
- ☐ A rested paddock with no hazards and good fencing
- ☐ Or deep bedded stable

Monitoring

- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Foaling alarms


Foaling Kit

- ☐ Tail bandage
- ☐ Clean towels
- ☐ Clean water and cotton wool to wash the mare
- ☐ Phone to call for help and monitor timings
- ☐ Obstetric lubricant
- ☐ Disposable sterile examination gloves
- ☐ Head torch
- ☐ Sharp scissors or scalpel blade
- ☐ Bucket for the placenta
- ☐ Thermometer
- ☐ Fleet enema
- ☐ Umbilical spray/dip
 - Diluted (1%) iodine (riodine or betadine solution)
 - OR chlorhexidine solution (dilute 1 part 2% chlorhexidine with 3 parts sterile water +/- surgical spirit to help dry)



Foaling Prediction

- The average gestation length for a mare is 340 days
- This can vary and repeat broodmares tend to follow a similar pattern to previous years (i.e. stick to the same gestation length and signs)
- Maiden mares can show minimal signs and be difficult to predict therefore it is important to monitor carefully
- The mammary glands will begin to fill 2 – 4 weeks prior to foaling - this initially will walk off and reduce in size with exercise/walking as the day goes on, and then closer to foaling the udder will remain large and teats engorged/pointing
- The muscles in the tail head will relax in the weeks leading up to foaling
- The vulva will begin to relax and elongate, losing the wrinkled appearance days prior to foaling
- Waxing of teats occurs approximately 48h prior to foaling - this is when small secretions of colostrum may dry up at the end of each teat

 Call the vet if the mare is running milk prior to foaling

FOALING

Stage 1 - Positioning of the foal

- Initial uterine contractions begin and the foal rotates into position
- Changes in behaviour including: restlessness, sweating, pacing, getting up and down (becomes more frequent) and flicking of her tail
- This stage can take up to several hours (<12h)
- Ends with her waters breaking

What to do:

- Keep the mare quiet in the stable/paddock
- Bandage her tail and clean vulva gently with fresh water

Stage 2 - Expulsion of the foal

- Starts with her waters breaking
- The mare will usually be in lateral recumbency (lying down) and strong abdominal contractions occur
- A white membrane (amniotic sac) should protrude from the vulva
- The foal should then present both front feet first, one slightly in front of the other, followed by the head on top of the legs
- The mare may get up and down to position the foal
- Once the head is visible, peel the white membrane off the nose
- The foal should be delivered within 20 minutes

What to do:

- The mare should not require assistance (if need to do so, please wear gloves to determine foal position)



Call vet if:

- No foal presented in 15 minutes of the waters breaking
- Abnormal position: Head only, head and one foot or back feet etc
- Evidence of haemorrhage (bleeding)
- Red bag instead of pearly white amnion

Stage 3 - Passing of the placenta

- Expulsion of the placenta in <3hrs
- Tie up the placenta carefully into a knot if touching the ground



Call vet if:

- The placenta is still attached after 3 hours
- If not all the placenta is present when checking what has been passed – the most common site to be stuck is the tip of the non-pregnant horn
- The mare is showing signs of colic or depression

POST FOALING

Within seconds the foal should sit into sternal (upright)

- Suck reflex after 15-30 mins and the foal should be alert/active
- Standing within 1 hour
- The foal should then start searching for the udder
- Nursing within 2 hours (latched on and swallowing milk)
- Passed meconium (the first dark brown pellets of faeces, should then be followed by soft yellow milky faeces) within 4 hours
 - use the enema if no meconium has passed
- Within 6-12 hours the foal should have urinated
- The mare will start to lick foal but you can towel dry the foal if it is particularly cold
- Allow the mare and foal time to bond
- Do not cut the umbilical cord – allow to break naturally

Call vet if:

- Foal is lethargic or weak
- Does not nurse, urinate or defecate
- Has abnormal vital signs e.g. fever or yellow membranes
- Swollen joints
- Diarrhoea
- Urine out of umbilicus



Next steps

- Vet check the following day of both the mare and foal
- Foal IgG test (12-18h post foaling)