



What's Up Doc?

February 2019

IN THIS ISSUE

Great Expectations:

Broodmare Nutrition During Pregnancy



Core EQ
New Spring Vaccine!

Great Expectations: Broodmare Nutrition During Pregnancy

It's the season for babies! Lambs, kids, calves and foals are all dropping from the new year through spring. Foaling season is always very exciting, but appropriate care and feeding of the broodmare prior to parturition is necessary. Proper nutrition of the broodmare will help ensure that she produces a healthy foal, that she will be able to care for and feed the foal and increases the chance of success in rebreeding for the next year's foal crop. The ideal body condition score for a broodmare during her pregnancy is 5-6 on the scale out of 9. A mare that is too skinny will do poorly and as the foal grows it will take nutrients from the mother and her condition will likely worsen. An overweight mare may have a more difficult pregnancy, delivery and there is greater risk of an unhealthy foal.

Feeding recommendations vary by the stage of pregnancy and whether she has a foal at her side. During

the first seven to eight months of a mare's pregnancy, the fetus gains about 0.2 pounds per day but during the last three to four months they can gain up to one pound per day. A dry broodmare (no foal at her side) needs high quality forages (hay, pasture) during the first six to seven months of pregnancy, along with a vitamin and mineral supplement to meet her nutritional requirements.

During the last three to four months of pregnancy the mare will need additional protein, calories, vitamins and minerals to help support the rapidly growing fetus. There is also less room in the abdomen for her stomach and intestines due to the growing fetus. This commonly causes the mare to consume less food or take longer to eat. Having high quality forage available for her to free feed on as well as a balanced ration of grain high in protein to supply essential amino acids, vitamins and minerals to help produce a thrifty foal. During the tenth month the fetus absorbs most of its trace minerals, which is essential for proper bone development. Once the foal is born the broodmare's milk contains very low levels of the minerals the foal needs to grow. The tenth



Go ahead, tell me how beautiful pregnancy is one more time!

month is also the ideal time to vaccinate the broodmare. Vaccinating the broodmare will boost her antibodies. Then, when the foal is born, it will gain some immunity through passive transfer from the colostrum.

It's very important for the broodmare to remain at a body condition score of 5-6 especially during the last stage of pregnancy due to the extreme calorie use once she starts lactating and nursing a foal. It is very difficult to put weight on a lactating mare and having a low weight may make re-breeding difficult. Choosing a mare and foal grain that is nutrient and calorie dense will allow the broodmare to eat less but gain or maintain the perfect broodmare physique. Once she has foaled, it is recommended she continue to be fed grain formulated for a mare and foal since the foal inevitably will eat whatever the mare eats. A mare and foal grain will benefit the foal with proper levels of vitamins, minerals and proteins (look for at least 16%), to help them grow correctly. A balanced ration is key to maintaining a healthy growing pace. Overfeeding can have dangerous consequences.

Warning: Summer Fescue Toxicosis (Although not common in Colorado)

Pastures and hay (know where your hay is from) may contain a certain type of forage called Fescue. This forage can have an endophyte fungus on the fescue which can cause multiple problems in the broodmare and the foal. The broodmare may have trouble getting in foal, or experience early embryonic death. Prolonged gestation, abortion, dystocia, thickened placenta, retained placenta, or suppression of lactation (no milk) may also be seen in a broodmare with Fescue toxicosis. The effect on foals can also be damaging with symptoms such as abnormal maturation, weakness, or starvation if the broodmare is not producing milk. Your local extension office will be able to tell you if you have fescue in your pasture. The best treatment for Fescue Toxicosis is prevention.



It's time to start thinking about spring vaccines!!

We are excited to announce we are carrying a new vaccine called CORE EQ.



- Eastern Encephalitis
- Western Encephalitis
 - Tetanus
 - West Nile Virus
 - Rabies



CORE EQ is the first and only vaccine to contain all 5 core equine vaccines recommended by American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).