

IS YOUR MARE READY FOR THE BREEDING SEASON?

by Elizabeth Edmunds, DVM

Preparation for the spring breeding season for your mare actually starts in the fall. Whether your mare is a maiden or a multiparous pro, there are several steps you can take to help get a good start to the breeding season.

The first step is a complete physical examination, with special attention given to the mare's general health & reproductive history. Problems with weight, teeth, endocrine disorders, lameness, or any chronic health concern should be addressed now. For optimal reproductive success, the mare should be in the best possible health. The second step is a reproductive exam. An external examination evaluates vulvar conformation, identifying problems such as pneumovagina and prior foaling injuries.

A speculum exam of the vagina can identify urine pooling or abnormalities of the external cervical os (opening). A rectal examination, including an ultrasound exam, can identify pathology associated with the ovaries and uterus, including the presence of intra-uterine fluid or cysts. If your veterinarian identifies a problem within the uterus, further diagnostics such as endometrial culture and cytology, endometrial biopsy or hysteroscopy may be chosen.

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IS YOUR STALLION READY FOR THE BREEDING SEASON?

by Robert Gregory, DVM

A breeding soundness examination for your stallion prior to the busy activity surrounding the demands of mare owners anxious for an early pregnancy, can help you and your veterinarian manage your horse's ability to have an acceptable pregnancy rate and successful breeding season.

Your stallion's history can be an important first step in the breeding soundness exam. Questions regarding which horses are in your stallion's family tree, your stallion's health history, and your stallion's exercise and feeding program are all important. Specific reproduction history is also a key to a successful new season.

The second step is a complete physical exam. This exam includes conformation with attention to old injuries. Good eyes, teeth, and hind limbs make for a solid animal in the breeding shed.

The third step is an in-depth reproductive exam. This involves an evaluation of the stallion's behavior, a thorough physical reproductive exam, and a semen evaluation for quality, volume, and bacterial content. Consideration of these factors will help determine the number and frequency of mares to be serviced.

A good beginning to the season with a breeding soundness exam, followed up by appropriate management, can be a recipe for a successful season for your stallion.

CHANGES AT PUGET SOUND EQUINE REPRODUCTION CENTER

Dr. Elizabeth Edmunds returns to Puget Sound Equine Reproduction Center (PSERC) in 2002 to work with mares. She will be joined by Dr. Robert Gregory who will handle the stallion work. Dr. Brandi Scharmer will be assisting, and Dr. John Mitten will continue to be available on a consulting basis. As you may know, Dr. Toby Ewing has left Pilchuck to explore educational and career opportunities.

For more information about these doctors, please see page 2.

FOAL OUT SERVICES

Please note that Puget Sound Farms will no longer offer foal out services starting with the 2002 season.

EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

We are delighted to announce that Sue McDonnell, Ph.D. will be coming to our area to present an evening seminar on equine behavior. It will take place on January 24th in the Woodinville area. A well-known authority on the subject, she lectures widely on equine behavior. A detailed mailing will be sent at the beginning of January.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

from all of us at

**PUGET SOUND EQUINE
REPRODUCTION CENTER**

**- a division of Pilchuck
Veterinary Hospital**

IS YOUR MARE READY *continued*

The advantage of all this advance preparation is just that...being prepared to make the most of the limited number of heat cycles the mare has to breed to produce a spring foal. Early identification of general health or reproductive concerns can lead to pre-emptive therapy so that your mare enters the breeding season with the best possible chance of becoming pregnant...your ultimate goal!

Finally, when your mare has been determined to be in sound health, consider putting your mare under lights. Mares are seasonally polyestrous, meaning that during the breeding season (long hours of daylight), they cycle about every 21-23 days. During the winter, they typically go into anestrus (a period of diminished ovarian activity). Between winter anestrus and regular cyclic activity lies a transitional period of up to several months, marked by irregular cycles and inconsistent ovulation. Increasing hours of daylight helps orchestrate the hormonal events that bring your mare into regular cyclic activity. By putting your mare under "daylight" for 16 hours a day starting at least two months before you'd like to start breeding, you help bring your mare through the transition period into more predictable heat behavior.

How much light and how long? Add on to the available daylight hours by artificially extending the day into the evening with an automatic timer set to shut off when 16 hours total daylight has been reached. 200 watts per 12' X 12' stall is adequate. You may discontinue use of lights when the amount of natural daylight reaches 16 hours per day. Do not discontinue lights prematurely or your mare, sensing the now "shortening" days, may fall back into a transitional period!

By preparing your mare before the breeding season, you give her the best possible chance of creating a little miracle – a 2003 foal!

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PSERC OFFICE HOURS

Current PSERC hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 AM to 1 PM. After February 1, 2002 hours will be Monday to Friday from 8 AM to 1 PM. Phone messages and calls concerning reproduction will be handled during these times.

BOOKING FOR 2002 BREEDING SEASON

Please call 360-568-7455 during office hours to book your mares or stallions for breeding or collection. If you would like to haul in to PSERC for a single procedure, please call Pilchuck Veterinary Hospital at 360-568-3111 or 800-208-9192, extension 4, to book an appointment with one of our doctors.

WATCH FOR OUR EXPANDED & REDESIGNED WEB SITE IN FEBRUARY!

To download admissions forms or for more information about the breeding center, visit www.pilchuckvet.com.

THANK YOU!

All of us at PSERC & Pilchuck Veterinary Hospital would like to thank you for your business.

PSERC DOCTORS

Elizabeth Edmunds, DVM, a New Hampshire native, is a 1998 graduate of Cornell University (NY State College of Veterinary Medicine). Dr. Edmunds joined Pilchuck Veterinary Hospital for a one-year internship in 1998, and stayed on as a regular staff member working with the equine medicine cases that come to the hospital. She spends spring and summer mornings doing equine reproductive work at Puget Sound Equine Reproduction Center, and autumn through winter months, divides her time between treating hospital cases and making farm visits.

Robert C. Gregory, DVM, is a 1979 honors graduate of the National Veterinary School in Toulouse, France. He completed a residency in large animal surgery (predominantly equine) at Tufts University, and until 1998, practiced in California. Dr. Gregory belonged to the veterinary staff for the L.A. Olympics in 1984, and continues to be an active competition vet, primarily for endurance rides, including the Tevis Cup. Living and practicing in Washington since 1999, Dr. Gregory has a background in racetrack and reproduction work, and a special interest in equine dentistry.

John Mitten, DVM, clinician emeritus, is the owner of Puget Sound Farms, the location of Puget Sound Equine Reproduction Center. Dr. Mitten graduated from Washington State University in 1965, and joined Pilchuck Veterinary Hospital in 1969. Since 1979, he has concentrated on issues related to the performance horse and on equine reproduction. His special interest has led to proficiency in all aspects of the equine reproduction process, including embryo transfer and artificial insemination using cooled or frozen semen. In 1997, the Washington State Veterinary Medical Association named Dr. Mitten, "Practitioner of the Year".



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