So you want to breed your mare?

There are a number of preparations that need to be made so that your mare is comfortable and healthy during her pregnancy. Just as in humans, mares need to be in optimum health to avoid the heartache of a difficult pregnancy, delivery or worse an unhealthy foal. Breeding an early foal can be more difficult as mares may not have started to cycle regularly. Ensure the mare is fed a vitamin and mineral supplement or a complete balanced diet. Maintain good foot care and trimming and remove hind shoes if she is going to stud. Make sure your mare is wormed and vaccinated up to date for equine influenza and tetanus.

Breeding your own foal from a beloved mare can be immensely rewarding, What to consider what type of horse or pony you are hoping to breed in terms of:

• Size
• Temperament
• Ability
• Facilities that will be required for keeping a mare and foal
Pre-breeding Veterinary Examination

The first thing is to have your mare examined by a veterinarian in advance of the time you are planning to breed her. This will establish her breeding soundness. Most mares stop cycling in the winter months and begin cycling in spring in response to the longer day length.

- Finding out this information at an early stage can prevent the expense and disappointment of trying to breed from a sub-fertile mare. This examination is best performed in stocks or under sedation if the mare is a maiden.
- Have the vet take a swab this will determine if she is carrying any infections that need to be treated. Yes a "virgin" mare can have infections. Clitoral swab for Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM): the culture takes at least 7 days so you need to plan ahead; Many studs will require this test so that nothing can be passed to the stallion. Also, infections can make it hard if not impossible to achieve a pregnancy.
- Make sure the mare has her vaccinations. Blood test for Equine Viral Arteritis (EVA); All stud farms will require a negative Coggins test, some stud farms may require an EVA test before breeding. If your mare is going away to stud you will need to check the requirements of the individual stud or AI centre. Other test as requested e.g. uterine swab, strangles blood test.
- Have her wormed and her feet trimmed prior to going to stud.
- Maintain your mare's weight at an optimum level. Mare's that are too fat can have a difficult time conceiving and delivering. Mare's that are too skinny can have an even more difficult time. The best conditioned mare has enough fat so that you can't see the ribs but not so much that you can't find them by feel.

The Vet examination will usually include:

- Examination of the conformation of the vulva
- Examination of the vagina and cervix using a speculum
- Ultrasound examination of the uterus and ovaries carried out internally through the rectum.

Based on this examination your vet may suggest some treatment prior to or during breeding or pregnancy to improve the chances of her successfully conceiving and carrying a foal.

Natural Service or Artificial Insemination (AI)

- AI can be done using chilled or frozen semen. Chilled semen can be shipped overnight from the UK and from some places in Europe.
- Frozen semen allows you to use a stallion from anywhere in the world and even those who have now died.
- Natural service is the most economical and may be the best option if the stallion you want to use to very local to you.
- Some problem mares have better fertility with AI.
- The risk of injury to mare, stallion and handlers and the risk of spread of disease are reduced with AI compared to natural service.

When your preparation is done then you can begin to choose the stallion you wish your mare to breed to for your chosen discipline.
The Advantages of AI

- Reduced risk to mares with/without foals, stallions and handlers
- Opportunities to use almost any stallion anywhere in the world
- Higher success rates of conception with AI for older mare who may be more susceptible to non-uterine infections after natural covering.
- The risk of infection to the mare from venereally transmitted diseases is reduced
- Improved fertility rates
- Less stressful for maiden/older mares that are prone to be anxious types

Choosing a Stallion

- Ensure that he has a good temperament, correct conformation, high fertility and produces quality progeny.
- Consider the size and type of foal that you want to produce and for what discipline.
- Find out when the stallion is available and if they offer natural service or AI.
- Make sure that you are clear on the terms of the stud fee and what will happen if your mare does not get in foal.

Your check list:

- Pre-breeding assessment and swab by your vet
- Chosen your stallion
- Communicated with Stud
- Booked your vet in for scanning in preparation for AI'ing

Ordering Transported Semen through TBS

- Call TBS Stud to check for stallions availability
- Fill in Transported Semen order form online
- Choose payment method, either through Paypal or BACS - You will receive an email of order payment and order form confirmation.
- Communicate with TBS Stud when vet scans mare to order semen
- Our AI technician will come to your house and artificially inseminate your mare onsite if within the South West or Post semen to your home or Vet who will AI your mare
What TBS can do for you

Specialist assessment for problem/sub fertile mares. DEFRA Approved AI Technician on site with over 14 years experience, insemination with fresh, chilled and Frozen semen. Resident and world wide stallions available.

Is your mare due to foal? Need advice? Need foaling Kits?

TBS offer after care and advice once the mare is in foal
‘WE’RE JUST A PHONE CALL AWAY’
TBS can offer a complete guide from feeding and caring for your mare to vaccinating and worming the pregnant mare, preparing the foaling box, the last stage of gestation, foaling care of the new born foal. TBS have available For Sale Foaling Kits, just email us with any parts that you would be interested in and we can email you a PDF file of useful information and tips to help you.

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