

HAYES EQUINE VETERINARY SERVICES

6544 FM 1753
Katie Hayes, DVM
www.hayesequinevet.com

DENISON, TX 75021

(903) 465-0777
Meghan McCarville, DVM
Find us on Facebook

February 2017 Newsletter

With foaling season coming up we all are getting excited about the new little ones that are soon going to be gamboling around the pasture. However, before that can happen, we need to be paying attention to our mares as they're getting ready to foal. There are several foaling complications that occur every year, so it's important to keep an eye out so you can catch them early.

Placentitis

The placenta is the bag in which the foal lives during gestation. It is a big part of how the foal gets its nutrients and oxygen supply. Placentitis is the term for a placenta that has gotten inflamed. This is most



commonly caused by an infectious agent (bacterial, viral, or fungal) that has taken over the placenta. The inflammation in the placenta causes decreased nutrient and oxygen exchange, and the infectious agent can even infect the foal. It is one of the most common causes of abortions in mares near birth. Common signs include discharge from the vulva, "bagging up," and other signs of birth. Diagnosis involves doing an ultrasound and measuring the thickness of the placenta. Treatment

involves trying to get rid of the cause, whether using antibiotics and anti-inflammatories or other medications.

Red Bag

This occurs during birth, and happens when the placenta detaches from the uterus too early. This is especially concerning because the placenta is what provides oxygen to the foal until his chest can expand. If you see this when your mare is giving birth, consider it an emergency because the foal will suffocate if this is not immediately fixed.

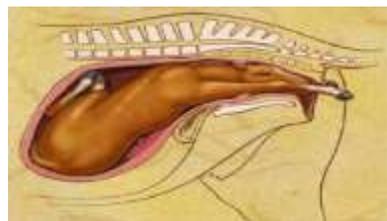
Treatment of this condition involves cutting open the sack and immediately delivering the foal to get it breathing as quickly as possible.

Just make sure before cutting that the red bag that it is not the rectum you are cutting through! After a red bag occurs, mares are more prone to developing a red bag in subsequent births, so always make sure to observe mares with a history of red bags.



Dystocia

This is a fancy term for foals that are "stuck." Luckily, this is not a common problem in horses but it can still occur. Foals are meant to come out in the "diving" position, with the head resting on top of the forelegs as they come through the birth canal. Any position other than this causes major difficulties in foaling.



A veterinarian should be called IMMEDIATELY if the mare is actively pushing and the foal is taking longer than 15-20 minutes to come out. Oftentimes, to correct this, the mare will have to be anesthetized to try to get the foal in a more normal position, or a cesarean section will

need to be performed.

Fescue Toxicosis

This occurs when pregnant mares have grazed on endophyte (a type of fungus) infected fescue grass during late gestation. Mares that have eaten this fescue have a longer gestation period, higher stillbirth rates, and little to no milk production. This fungus is most prevalent in summer months, so mares that birth later in the year are at a higher risk for fescue toxicosis. Since most of the country has fescue that grows the endophyte (there are certain strains of endophyte free fescue but they're hard to keep growing), it's safe to assume that if there is fescue in the pasture, your mares are at risk. Remove mares from fescue at least 6 weeks prior to foaling and observe them closely for development of a bag. If the mare gives birth but has no bag, it may be necessary to give the foal colostrum and treat the mare with a drug called Equidone and oxytocin to encourage milk production.

Retained Placenta

Any mare that does not deliver her placenta within 4 hours of giving birth is considered to have a retained placenta. This placenta needs to be removed as soon as possible as it can cause infections to take root and even make the mare sick. If your mare didn't deliver her placenta within four hours, it's time to call the veterinarian who can assist her in delivering the placenta. If the placenta is delivered, it's always important to check that the whole placenta is present, as pieces of the placenta can be left behind as well. If a retained placenta is noticed, DON'T try to pull it out on your own! At best, you can cause the placenta to tear, and at worst you can cause the mare to prolapse, which is where the uterus falls out of the body.



As always, if any of these symptoms are noticed, PLEASE call your veterinarian as the foal's life may depend on it! And your veterinarian always welcomes questions, comments, or concerns.

Don't forget our first mares are due in March!

- Pre-foaling vaccines should be given 6 weeks prior to foaling
- Deworming should occur 1 month prior to foaling
- Pick up your foaling kits that include a tetanus antitoxin, an enema, and chlorhexidine navel dip
- Foal prediction kits are super helpful when you want to know when to start staying up with your mares!

TEETH SPECIAL MONTH OF FEBRUARY – Tuesday and Wednesdays in Denison clinic. Teeth Float \$100.00 which includes float and sedation. Any extra dental services such as bit seat, extractions ect... will not be included and charged at normal price over special. Call office @ (903) 465-0777 and book your appointment.

Castration Signs: Feb 19th thru 25th