

# Management of your Pregnant Mare

To help ensure optimal health for both your mare and foal during and after pregnancy, we recommend you maintain your mare's routine health schedule, and prepare her for foaling as follows:

## Vaccination

We recommend vaccinating your mare for strangles and tetanus one month before her expected foaling date. The colostrum, the first milk your foal will drink, is rich in immunoglobulins. A vaccination booster one month before foaling will help protect your foal against these diseases.

## Dewormer drench

Treat your mare with a broad spectrum drench, like Equest Plus Tape, within the last month prior to foaling. Deworming your mare will reduce parasite pressure on your new born foal.

## Does my mare have a Caslick?

A caslick should be opened around one month before foaling. We can open your mare's caslick for you at the same time as we vaccinate. This is a minor procedure, performed by your veterinarian.

## Where should my mare foal?

A grass paddock or large yard is ideal for your mare to foal in – horses have been giving birth on the open ranges for many years, and this is still an acceptable choice.

If your mare will foal in a paddock, separate her from other horses in the lead up to foaling, so she can foal undisturbed. Make sure the fence is secure so the foal cannot slip underneath and become injured or separated from its mother.

Alternatively, a big stall, well bedded with deep straw is a good place for your mare to have a foal. Most mares foal at night, so you can still turn her out during the day and bring her in overnight.

## Signs of being close to foaling:

### Bagging up and waxing

During late term pregnancy the mare's udder starts to become bigger and prepare for milk production. Days before the foaling the udder becomes significantly bigger and both teats will fill up. Very full teats point away from each other and this can indicate that your mare is getting closer to foaling.

Waxing means your mare has little dried drops on her teats, which can indicate she might foal within the next 24 hours.

### Shape of abdomen

Observe the shape of your mare's belly. When heavily pregnant, your mare's belly will be very big and round, but the closer she is to foal, the more her belly drops. Some mares even develop some oedema (fluid retention) on their bellies.

### Shape of vulva

If your mare allows you, lift her tail once daily to look at her vulva. A normal vulva is not very long and has wrinkles on its sides. Right before foaling everything on her hind end relaxes, including her vulva. It will appear much longer to you and won't have as many wrinkles on its side.

### Tail tone

The hind end will loosen up before foaling. If you lift her tail daily, you will notice the tail has strong tone and gives you some resistance. The closer she is to foaling, the less to no resistance you will feel when lifting her tail.

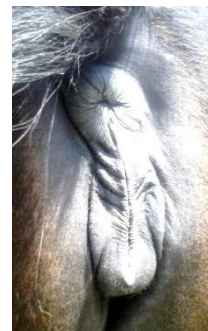
**But** even with the best monitoring, some mares can be unpredictable. Make sure your mare is in good condition and overall health, and let us know if you have any questions or concerns.



When the udder has bagged up with milk, the teats will point away from each other in the direction of the arrows.



Note the wax-like secretion at the ends of the teats.



A normal vulva (left), and a relaxed, elongated vulva when the mare is close to foaling (right).