

ASK THE EXPERTS: Broodmares, continued...

Foaling stalls are often used as a convenient means of checking on the broodmare during the night, providing a somewhat temperature controlled space for foaling, and for corralling mares and newborn foals when nutrition and care is provided. Foaling stalls are often larger than the average stall with 12 x 14 feet or 12 x 24 feet being common sizes. They are bedded well with straw and have walls and stall accessories with foal safety in mind. Alternatively, broodmares may foal outside provided it's a clean grassy area, away from the herd, and the weather is favorable. – *Dr. Amy Burk*

Q. When should the mare be restricted to a foaling stall? Or should they always have daily turnout?

A. Turnout during the day is ideal. The vast majority of mares will foal in the early hours, so they can be kept in the stall overnight. – *Dr. Sara Brunsten*

Most horses are happiest out of a stall, so broodmares are usually housed out in the pasture/paddock during the day and then brought in at night to watch for foaling. Many breed-

ers invest in foaling cameras that allow them to keep an eye on their broodmares while they are out on pasture and in the stall at night. Many mares require assistance during foaling, so keeping an eye on them to catch when foaling starts is of great importance. – *Dr. Amy Burk*

Q. Once the foal is born, how soon should a veterinarian examine the foal (if not present at its birth)?

A. I recommend a newborn/post foaling exam for both mare and foal at 12-24 hours of age. – *Dr. Sara Brunsten*

This is especially true if any concerns arise about the mare and foal after foaling. It is common for the veterinarian to test the foal's blood for antibody levels to make sure it received enough colostrum to maintain a healthy immune system. Also, don't forget to clean the placenta and store it so the veterinarian can inspect it during their visit. – *Dr. Amy Burk*

Q. What is the biggest tip you would give mare owners thinking of breeding?

Breeding horses to produce a remarkable

young foal is a very rewarding experience, but it's not without its costs and risks. Do your homework. There is a plethora of really informative recorded webinars on breeding and foaling on the Internet. Seek out advice from experienced horse breeders and also the services of a veterinarian with prior experience in reproductive services.

Mare owners that are not experienced with foaling should consider boarding their mare at a farm that offers professional foaling services with many having a veterinarian on-site.

In addition, raising foals takes a good knowledge of safe handling practices and training theory as well as time. There's something incredibly miraculous about watching a foal being born and standing to nurse for the first time. There is also something incredibly humbling when every effort expended to save a mare or foal just isn't enough. Breeding mares and raising foals isn't for the faint-hearted, but it certainly can be one of most rewarding experiences of anyone's life. – *Dr. Amy Burk*

Have a plan ready for every possibility. – *Dr. Sara Brunsten*

To read more tips and recommendations from additional veterinarians such as Dr. William Engel, Ridgeview Veterinary Practice; and Dr. Moira Nusbaum, PenMar Equine, please see equiery.com later this month! *The Equiery* would like to thank all the experts who contributed to this article. If you would like to contribute to a future "Ask the Experts" column, please contact Katherine Rizzo at editor@equiery.com.