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## JUNE 2007 NEWSLETTER

### EQUINE

#### FOALING TIME REMINDERS

The warmer weather not only indicates the arrival of spring, but also the arrival of foals. The majority of mares will foal unassisted and very little human intervention will be required. However, when a problem does arise timely assistance is vital.

When a mare is approaching her expected due date, close observations become very useful. Most mares will develop a routine and generally a change from their routine indicates that parturition (foaling) is quickly approaching. In general, some of the following signs become evident; relaxation of the tail and loins, sweating, pacing, nervousness, sudden narrowing of the abdomen (this occurs due to change in orientation of the foal), and pawing. It is important to differentiate between colic and imminent foaling as many of the clinical signs are similar.

Once the mare lies down, starts to actively strain and a grey/white sac appears at the vulva, the foal should be expelled within approximately 30 minutes. The two front feet and the nose should be visible; if they are not all present help should be summoned.

**Once the foal is born there are certain events that should occur promptly. The foal should rise to its feet within 30-60 minutes. The mare should also rise to her feet after cleaning the foal. Nursing should begin 30-90 minutes after foaling and the mare should pass the placenta within 3 hours.**

It becomes an emergency if the placenta (afterbirth) has not been passed within 3 hours - due to the release of toxins into the bloodstream. If, after 2 hours, the placenta hasn't begun to be expelled, it is time to call the veterinarian. Do not attempt to simply pull the placenta out. Early separation can cause excessive and potentially fatal bleeding. Additionally, if a piece of placenta is accidentally left behind the mare can become very ill and may become toxic which often leads to death.

With careful planning and close observation foaling time can become slightly less stressful. Please remember, if problems arise it is better to call earlier than later.

### SWINE

The OPIC Swine Health Advisory Board, OSHAB has a summer PRRS biosecurity project starting. OSHAB has hired two summer students to conduct PRRS risk assessments on sow herds. The PRRS risk assessment tool was developed by Dr. Dale Polson of B.I. It is a computer program that begins with 155 questions covering all external and internal biosecurity risks as it pertains to PRRS virus. Once the risk assessment questions have been answered a report is generated from Iowa State University that rates your farm's risk of a PRRS break against the other farms in the data base.

Over the next few months you can sign up to have your sow herd assessed. A student will come to your house or office, conduct the risk assessment, contact us for any information you can't answer and then a report will be generated for you and also for our clinic. The assessment is free and you also receive a golf shirt and OPIC membership.

We are very excited about this opportunity. It is about a \$300.00 value and we would like any interested clients to call the clinic to be added to the PRRS risk assessment list. It will be first come first serve so don't delay. Once we have passed on your name and contact information one of the students will set up a time to conduct the risk assessment. Note: the program is only for sow herds, they can be farrow to finish, farrow to feeder pig or farrow to early wean. Call and ask to be added to the list!

## **DAIRY**

Heat takes its toll on dairy cows this time of year, but there is still time for you to act to decrease the severity hot, humid weather will have on your herd.

The ideal temperature for a dairy cows is between 41° F and 77 °F (5° C and 25°C). Above this and cows must use energy to cool themselves through heat loss. High producing animals are the cows most sensitive. Dry matter intake can drop approximately 10% and milk production by as much as 30%.

In order to combat heat stress there are a few things you can do:

- 1) Because cows in hot weather will eat less (and less often) this increases the risk of rumen acidosis and laminitis. You should include sodium bicarbonate and yeast in the ration to help counter these problems. In addition the use of bicarbonate will decrease acid swings in the rumen which may drop butterfat leading to a high SNF ratio. Sometimes supplemental fat is added to the ration to fortify energy demands in hot weather when intakes fall. Certain minerals such as potassium and sodium should be increased in the ration as these are excreted in greater amounts during hot weather.
- 2) Cows must always have access to water. Besides its massive role in affecting milk production water is critical to cool the cows. Water intake may increase as much as 50% in hot weather. While water should always be available to cows it is very important that it be offered after milking when a large percentage of a cow's intake will be met. Water supplies should be capable of 3-5 gallons per minute.
- 3) While many farmers keep cows in during the day (or all summer long) cows on pasture must have access to shade to avoid the direct heat of the sun.
- 4) Heat stress will decrease conception rate due to less activity during estrus, reduced follicular activity and early embryonic death. Increased use of ovsynch during these periods will ensure cows get bred in a timely manner even when obvious signs of heat are suppressed.
- 5) Appropriate use of fans has been shown to drop air temperatures approximately 15°F in some studies. This relates to an increased milk production of 7-10 lbs./cow/day. Therefore, add more fans!
- 6) And at this time of year remember fly control. These nasty little critters spread bacteria, which cause watery mastitis and are generally a nuisance. Clean up spilled feed, manure and other areas of contamination where flies congregate and breed. There are a large number of effective commercial products available which will help reduce fly numbers- be prepared for flies!

