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May 2009 Newsletter

SWINE

The unfortunate impact of the influenza scare is another reminder of how small the world really is. As members of the swine industry, it is very important that we help to enlighten all people within our circle of influence that this is not a pork safety issue.

There are a few important points for discussion:

1. You cannot catch influenza from eating pork or poultry for that matter.
2. Influenza viruses are very common and the main risk of transmission is people to people.

There has been a lot of PRRS problems this spring. We had a fairly quiet fall and winter but the first quarter of 2009 has made up for that.

Here are some things you can and should be doing:

1. Set up a gilt isolation. Even if breeding stock producers are following the best testing program, virus can still contaminate barns between tests.
2. Make sure trucks are clean coming to sow barns especially.
3. Put in a Danish style entrance.

Niche market programs have been in some cases a very successful undertaking and in others a big disaster. One of the most important aspect of success is the health status of the herd. In my opinion , it is a very bad decision to not depop conventional health and repop high health if you are investing into antibiotic free programs.

For smaller family farms, these programs can look very attractive; please do not think in the short term and try and keep conventional health herds. Look at these programs as a long term commitment and start off on the right foot!!

If you have any questions regarding these programs, vaccinations needed and other ways to reduce risks, please give us a call.

EQUINE

BREEDING YOUR MARE

Evaluation of the Mare

Breeding a mare can be a very exciting but there are many factors you need to consider in deciding if your mare is a candidate for a broodmare. First, there is the cost of breeding the mare and necessary treatments such as vaccinations, parasite control and nutrition. Second, consider the uncertainties of birth and early development of the foal, and the cost of training a young horse. These issues must be weighed against the purchase of a horse that is already trained and ready for its intended use. If you decide to breed your mare, it is important that you plan and carefully execute a breeding program. Mistakes can cause long delays and add significantly to the cost of breeding your mare.

Although that lame horse that can no longer perform seems like a good candidate for a broodmare, generally, only physically sound mares are good candidate and your veterinarian can help you decide if your mare is a good choice.

A **Breeding Soundness Evaluation** is essential to provide you with valuable information about your mare. This exam is even more important with a mare that has a history of subfertility. This exam should include visual inspection of the vulva and vagina and palpation of the reproductive tract. Your vet may recommend further tests such as a uterine biopsy (provides information on ability of uterus to carry a foal) or uterine culture for infectious organisms and cytology.

If this exam reveals problems that would limit the fertility of your mare, your vet can recommend treatment or management procedures that will increase your chances of obtaining a live foal. In some cases, the mare may have problems so serious or chronic that you will be best advised not to breed the mare.

Breeding Season

Mares are seasonal breeders and respond to increasing day-length and enter their season in the spring. Ideal breeding time is from May through August. Sometimes it is not practical to breed your mare in May (ie. Intended purpose is racing) as the universal birthday is January 1st. This means a foal born in June racing against a foal born in January will have a 6 month disadvantage. Special measures can be taken to hasten the breeding season such as lighting programs to 'trick' you mare into believing it is spring (consult your veterinarian). Pregnancy lasts for about 335 to 342 days, but the length of gestation is extremely variable. Normal foals have been born after gestation periods as short as 305 days and as long as 400 days.

Breeding Your Mare

Poor management of breeding is the single most important cause of reproductive inefficiency in the horse. Most of the problems result from a failure to appreciate either the seasonal nature of reproduction in the horse, or the fact that mares have a variable estrous cycle pattern even during the breeding season.

The mare's cycle, the period between one ovulation and the next, is about 21 days long. Estrus, the time of sexual receptivity, occupies about seven days of the cycle. Unfortunately, **not all mares read the books** and can last anywhere from two or three days to two or three weeks. Diestrus, the period between two successive estrus periods, is more consistent in length and lasts about 14 to 16 days.

During a 'heat' (estrus), mares grow a follicle on their ovaries starting at the beginning of estrus. The follicle contains an 'egg' that is released when a mare ovulates. The mare releases this egg generally 2 days before she is out of estrus and this is when she can become pregnant. Ideally, breeding should occur close to the time of ovulation and no more than a day or two before. Breeding more than a few hours after ovulation is usually not very successful. A useful rule of thumb is to breed (cover) mares on the third day of estrus and every other day until they go out of estrus. This will require three breedings of a mare that stays in estrus for seven days.

Because estrus is so variable in length, and because ovulation is more closely associated with the end of estrus than with the beginning, deciding when and how often to breed your mare can be very difficult. Your veterinarian can help you decide when it is optimal to breed your mare by use of an ultrasound (to visualize the ovaries) and may recommend hormones to help your mare ovulate.

THIS MONTH WE ARE OFFERING A DISCOUNT ON BREEDING ULTRASOUNDS FROM MAY 10TH UNTIL JUNE 10TH. WE WOULD LIKE TO GET YOU OFF ON THE RIGHT TRACK THIS YEAR. TOO MANY PEOPLE END UP GUESSING AND WASTE VALUABLE TIME AND MONEY.

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SHEEP

Vaccine	Indications	Dosage	Administration
Tasvax 8	Blackleg, Black Disease, Lamb Dystentery, Enterotoxemia Pulpy Kidney and Tetanus 21 day meat withdrawal	2 or 4 ml SQ	All sheep over 3 months first time: 4ml then 2ml 6 weeks later. Revaccinate with 2ml at 6 month intervals. Note: Pregnant ewes should be done 2 weeks prior to lambing to increase antibodies in colostrum
Case-Bac	Caseous Lymphadenitis Seen as external abscesses and Internal abscesses (Thin ewe Syndrome) 21 day meat withdrawal 10 dose = \$1.15/dose 50 dose = \$0.90/dose.	2ml SQ	All sheep first time: 2ml then repeat in 4 weeks with 2ml. Revaccinate annually with 2 ml. Animals will not benefit from vaccination if already infected with the disease. These should be culled.
Caseous D-T	Enterotoxemia, Tetanus, Caseous Lymphadenitis 21 day meat withdrawal 10 dose = \$1.50/dose 50 dose = \$1.30/dose	2ml SQ	All sheep first time: 2ml, repeat in 4 weeks with 2ml. Revaccinate annually with 2ml Cull abscessed sheep since they are an infection source.
Chlamydia Psittaci Bacterin	Abortigenic Chlamydia serovar Potential cause of abortion 60 day meat withdrawal 10 dose = 3.00/dose 50 dose = \$2.60/dose	2ml SQ	Initially, 60 days prior to breeding: 2ml repeat 30 days later. Revaccinate annually just prior to breeding.

Recommendation:

Minimum: Tasvax 8 Plus cull abscess animals.
 Mid level: #1 Minimum and Case-Bac
 Or #2 Caseous D-T only plus cull abscess animals.
 Maximum: Mid level #1 or #2 Plus
 Chlamydia Bacterin (especially if abortions present).