

## Care of the New Born Foal.

*Information for owners of mares boarding at End House Stud.*

**Before arriving at stud:**

**Liase with the stud owner on the best time for your mare to arrive prior to foaling.**

**Check your mare is vaccinated up to date. As well as protecting the mare, this will help to ensure the mare provides protection to the foal in the first milk or colostrum.**

**Make sure she is wormed in accordance with the stud protocols.**

**Foaling:**

**End House Stud have many, many years of experience foaling mares and provide 24 hour care. Most mares foal unaided but it is good to know experienced help is on hand.**

**Foalings usually follow the rules of 1, 2, 3. Foals are on their feet within 1 hour, sucking by 2hours and the mare should have passed the afterbirth by 3 hours. Foals falling outside these timescales may need help and it may alert us to the fact that all is not well.**

**Is my foal healthy?**

**North West Equine Vets and End House Stud strongly recommend that even if both appear healthy, your mare and foal are checked by a veterinary surgeon in the first 24 hours after your foal has been born. The vet will perform a physical examination on the mare and foal, checking the mare is well and has not torn after foaling, for the foal we check responses to the outside world and sucking behaviour, assess limb conformation, checking the mouth for cleft palates and navel for problems and hernias, as well as listening to the heart and lungs.**

**A blood sample should be taken when the foal is at least 12 hours old and this is a vital part of the newborn foal check.**

**This blood sample is taken because the foal is born with a poorly functioning and immature immune system. The foal's**

ability to fight any infection it is exposed to in the first few WEEKS of life comes mainly from protection passed to it in the colostrum it drinks from the mare in the first few HOURS after birth. It is therefore vitally important that we check this immunity has been passed on by the mare and we do this by measuring the levels of antibody in the foal's blood. Just seeing the foal suck does not guarantee this process, called "Passive Transfer", has happened. Passive transfer depends on the quality of the colostrum the mare produces and the volume drunk, as well as the time after birth the foal drinks and the maturity of the foal's gut at birth. For instance, mares which run milk before they foal may have wasted all their precious colostrum. End House Stud have a supply of frozen colostrum for such cases foaling at the stud.

Foals with a Failure of Passive Transfer (FPT) are at great risk of developing septicaemia, diarrhoea, joint ill or other life threatening diseases. Identifying at risk foals from the blood sample means we can give them plasma transfusions and/or antibiotics and these procedures can protect the foal until its own immune system is up and running.

Any foals considered high risk at birth will require examination and treatment as a matter of urgency and these fees will be charged per item according to the practice normal charging guidelines.

For healthy foals it is recommended that all receive a new born foal check, usually at 12-24 hours old, which includes the blood test to detect FPT and reporting of results . The cost is £86 including vat and visit during normal office hours and so represents exceptional value.

Please note that in the event that a visit is needed out of hours, for example at night or over a weekend or Bank Holiday this will incur a surcharge. The fee does not include any treatments needed for mare or foal, or tetanus antitoxin given to unvaccinated mares or newborn foals. The timing of these visits is at the discretion of the stud manager and veterinary surgeons and is always done with the best interest of mare and foal in mind, according to the individual circumstances.

Please do not hesitate to contact North West Equine Vets with any queries relating to the care of your mare and foal.

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