

Dukes Vet Practice

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Stud Newsletter April 2012

Three foalings christen new fertility unit



Review of 2011 season

2011 started well with fine weather and lots of sunshine in April and May. We had good fertility results initially but in June and July the weather was cold and miserable.

There is no scientific research looking at the effect of an Aberdeenshire "summer" on fertility but there is no question some of the mares stopped cycling and conception rates dropped, particularly for mares with foals at foot using frozen semen. We are proposing to manage mares differently to avoid this happening again if the weather turns unseasonably cold.

To achieve this we have built three new foaling boxes to accommodate mares with foal at foot overnight during the critical window from insemination to implantation. We also propose to feed all mares twice daily this year to smooth out fluctuations in grass protein levels.

For other mares the conception rates were good and we did particularly well with embryo transfer, both in terms of embryo recovery rates and successful transfer rates. Although we only did low numbers our pregnancy percentages compare favourably with the best centres in the world.

Our newly built foaling boxes were christened in March with three ET recipients all foaling successfully. We now have our hands full looking after three very lively cheeky foals, including the one above and the colt in the top left picture. The owner of the embryos can choose whether to take the pregnant recipients home to foal or leave them here. The owners of these foals decided to leave the recipients with us and take the foals through to weaning.

Having three foaling boxes together and luckily all the mares foaling within a fortnight made managing them and supervising the foalings much easier.

The new unit consists of three boxes which can be used for foalings or to house mares for AI or stallions for semen collection. We have

(Cont over)

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Seven ET foals due in 2012



FMV photography

Jim with some of the pregnant ET recipients last summer

From six donor mares in the 2011 ET program, we did 11 inseminations and flushes recovering 8 embryos, 7 of which went on to establish pregnancies. This was using fresh, chilled and frozen semen from a range of stallions.

This year we are hoping to undertake more embryo transfer and are still actively looking for recipient mares. If anyone has a fit healthy mare which is not suitable for other purposes she may make a good ET recipient. We are ideally looking for mares between three and 10 years old and between 15.2 and 16.2 either to buy or take on loan. The mares should either be maiden or if they have been bred before they must have had good fertility and normal pregnancies. If you have any mares which might be suitable please contact Jim.

Fees for 2012

We have simplified the AI and ET fees for 2012. This will result in lower fees for fertile mares that conceive first time. The livery fees will increase to reflect increased cost of feed and being fed twice daily. All foals will now be handled and led whenever they come in so they should lead well and load by the time they go home.

Keeping up to date

Hannah has been to Newmarket on an AI training course ready for this season. Jim has been back to Keros in Belgium on an ET training course in September and recently attended a reproduction symposium in Gloucestershire. Jim is also going to another reproduction conference with the top experts from around the world in July meaning we should be fully up to date and using the latest knowledge and techniques.

New stallion

Silver Tiger (GB) 15.2 TB stallion by Tiger Hill (Ire) ex Moon Empress (Fra) by Rainbow Quest (USA)



Silver Tiger is a stunning 4yo thoroughbred stallion. He was bought in Newmarket last Autumn and has settled in well at Dykehead. He is very laid back and has lived out all winter with three geldings. He has great presence and conformation. We are hoping to train him for polo later this year. Contact the office for more details.

New fertility unit (cont)



also incorporated a purpose built fertility lab for embryo transfer, semen examination, evaluation, processing and storage.

