

Dukes Vet Practice

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Stud Newsletter January 2011

Out of season breeding



Review of 2010 season

We had a slight reduction in the overall number of mares in 2010 which is not surprising considering the financial climate last year. However we were still very pleased with our success rates which compare very favourably with the largest AI centres in Europe. We have combined three seasons together to give a representative picture in the statistics below.

In general AI with frozen semen appears to have slightly lower conception rates than chilled semen but the conception rate to first insemination is about the same. However there are sometimes problems with shipping chilled semen, either it doesn't arrive or the semen is of poor quality and not used. If these "non inseminations" were added in frozen semen will give at least as good results as chilled.

For logistical reasons we prefer to use frozen semen but are happy to work with both.

Dukes Vet Practice pregnancy rate per

	<u>Oestrus</u>	<u>Mare per year</u>
Chilled	60%	80%
Frozen	56%	78%
Our stallion	67%	96%
Overall	61%	86%

We have previously recommended waiting until the end of April to start breeding your mare. However we recognise that for various reasons some people want early foals so we will now accept a limited number of mares from mid March. However if you want an early foal you need to ensure your mare is going to be cycling on arrival at stud.

Mares are what is known as seasonally poly-oestrus. This means they normally come in to oestrus on repeated occasions during a certain period of the year – the breeding season. For mares in the Northern hemisphere the natural breeding season usually starts at the end of April and lasts for about 6 months. If your mare is already in foal then she will normally have a foal heat but then may return to a limbo state known as "transitional oestrus" if she is not mated then, until the normal breeding season starts.

Whilst some mares may appear to cycle well before this, it can be very frustrating trying to breed a mare at this time. If you want an early foal then for non pregnant mares they need

(Cont over)

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Dukes Veterinary Practice Limited
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Online payment facility now up and running

After a considerable delay, this month we should have a facility for you to pay your accounts online via our website www.dukesvets.com

We have revised all prices for 2011 which will result in an overall increase broadly inline with the retail price index. We have reduced the livery fee but increased the insemination fees to more accurately reflect costs.

If you don't want to pay a lot of money and go home with a mare not in foal then consider our new scheme – a fixed fee from £1000 if the mare is pregnant to cover all breeding and livery costs excluding third party fees but pay nothing if the mare is not pregnant. For full terms and conditions check the pricelist



Handling and trailer loading foals

Foals can be difficult to handle, but more importantly it is easy to give them bad experiences which they can keep for the rest of their lives. We are always careful handling foals but try and do as little as possible with other people's stock. The foals are usually quite happy with this but it can make them very difficult to load if they are big and strong when they are collected.

Jim has considerable experience of handling and working with foals and will supervise trailer loading and handling of your foals if you wish so they load when you come to collect them. If the foals don't load we won't charge you for the handling. If you are interested speak to Jim when booking your mare in.

Out of season breeding (Cont)

to be tricked into believing spring is coming early. We suggest two ways of encouraging early oestrus for non pregnant mares:-

1 Ensure a maximum of 9.5 hours continuous darkness for 70 days before planned first mating. You do not need 14.5 hours continuous light and can use 1 hour at 6 am and further two hours from 6.30 to 8.30 pm or something similar. Light level is 100 lux (approx 100w in normal stable – enough to read a newspaper!). After initial 30 day trigger you can be more relaxed with regime. Do not use 24hr continuous light.

2 The period can be shortened to a 45 day light regime by using a drug to stimulate prolactin secretion. The drug we use is not licenced for use in horses so you would need to contact us if you want to do this.

In order to be successful the mares must also be

- 1 On an adequate diet and in reasonable condition
- 2 In a comfortable environment
- 3 Not under stress

Pregnant mares will usually have a foal heat if they foal early in the season so you do not need to induce them to cycle early. However if they are in poor condition or under stress they will stop cycling after the first heat, and then usually return to oestrus around the end of April. Bring your mare to stud before her foal heat and if possible we will try and inseminate on the foal heat. We will manage the mares by stabling if conditions are inclement and keep them on a 9½ hour darkness regime to try and avoid them slipping into transitional oestrus if they do not conceive on the foal heat.

Mares wanted to use as embryo transfer recipients

We are looking for a few mares to use as recipients in our embryo transfer program. Ideally between about 15.3 and 16.2 and 3 – 8 yrs old. They will not be ridden but must be manageable and paddock sound. Conformation or type is not particularly important.

Breeding talk with Grampian BHS

Jim is giving a talk to Grampian BHS members on Friday 4th March covering current and futuristic equine breeding technologies including IVF, ICSE and cloning! Cabin Equestrian Centre 7.30pm.