PROPER FOALING CONDITIONS for YOUR MARE

By Steven A. Sansone

Foaling season has been upon us for nearly eight weeks. Most mares deliver in Spring due to moderate temperatures and conditions. As we enter the busiest segment of the season following are a few things for you to consider that your mare has a positive experience in producing a healthy foal for you.

Mares have ben delivering their foals for decades without man's intervention. Foaling accidents do occur. However, many problems are caused by well meaning, well intentioned people.

Mares will select a quiet, familiar, secluded location. Foaling is a rapid process. Usually occurs at night or in early morning hours. Why? In the wild this allowed the mare and foal to bond, for the foal to stand, nurse, and be mobile to avoid danger.

Less is better. If disturbed a mare may delay foaling. This can cause damage to the mare and or the foal. Observe the delivery. Intervene if it appears that the mare is having difficulty or is in distress.

The optimal location is a clean, grassy pasture. This is usually not the case. Due to domestication and economics the majority foal in a stall. Following is a list of recommendations for your reference.

- Clean bedding. Straw over large shavings preferred. Straw for comfort and shavings for absorption.
- Clean mare. If conditions are not conducive to a bath, towel the mare with warm water. Then dry and groom.
- Wrap or braid tail. Prevents possible lacerations to the foal.

- Clean mammary glands.
- Warm, dry environment. Extremes should be avoided.
- Stall should be ventilated, avoid drafts.
- Avoid heat lamps as they are a fire hazard.
- Clean water for the mare.
- Have your veterinarian's contact information if there are complications.
- Transportation available if the mare or foal is required to go to a clinic for care.

As a breeder or farm manager you have invested hours and resources to ensure that your mare has a healthy foal. Be prepared and enjoy the experience. Good luck!

- Resource; Ellensburg Animal Hospital