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Mount Up Virginia is published bi-monthly by  
King Management & Publishing.

Mount Up Virginia is designed with the mission to  
promote Virginia Quarter Horses,  
Paints, & Appaloosas.

The editor welcomes photos, but cannot guarantee  
their return. Article submissions are welcome, visit  
our website for instructions related to submissions.

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*Photo By: Kim Foster*



*Photo By: Mountain Top Ranch*





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## ***Letter from the Editor***

**T**hankfully, we are once again ringing in the New Year! If you are like me, you may be asking yourself... "Is 2009 the year for changes in your life?" Maybe you find yourself contemplating what you really want – a new home, new car, new horse or plain and simply just the time to enjoy your current horse(s).

Resolutions come and go, typically with good intentions. But more often than none we find ourselves disappointed later in the year with the failure of not meeting our New Year's resolutions. I've certainly encountered my share of failed resolutions. Too many times I've resolved to lose the extra pounds, or earn more money, and the cold hard reality is that I still have the extra pounds and have never earned enough money. This New Year I've decided to keep it simple with one "true" New Year's resolution and it's quite simple... Time management with self-confidence! With that being said, I would like to have more enjoyable time to ride my horses, with my kids, my dad, often my mom and sister and once in a blue moon my husband. It may sound nuts; however for me it's a reality. Not only is it a time management issue but I also need the ability or self-confidence to sometimes say "No"!

My family has grown substantially and all the children play sports year round including our obvious fondness of the barrel racing sport; therefore timing is typically crucial in all that we do. In the past trail riding had been a popular past time for our family and my 2009 resolution should allow me the opportunity to take time and slow down, enjoy life with my family, take our horses and enjoy the trails of Virginia.

My wish for you and your family is that 2009 will bring you much love, happiness, success, and time to enjoy your family and horses. May it be the best year ever!

Fondly,  
*Kim*





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# ***Breeding Pointers for Every Mare Owner***

***by Kim Foster***

Searching for the perfect Stallion is often a long endured task. It can be gruelling and trying, as it's the goal of every mare owner to find the stallion that would suit his/her mare best. Over the next few months some stallions will change hands or decisions will be made to stand them at stud in different parts of the country. With this in mind it may pay to make contact with any potential stallion owner so that you know where the stallion will be standing.

Every breeder should set himself a target as to what he/she wants to breed and why!

First of all list your aims and objectives in breeding a foal. What do you plan to do with it? Are you going to show or compete? Will it be a riding horse doing local shows and competitions or do you aspire to the heady heights of international competition? It is up to you to set the standard by which you judge both your mare and the stallion.

The next thing you need to do is to take a good long look at your mare. It is very difficult to be objective about your own horse but you need to have an idea of the bad points which you would like to try and improve upon in any off-spring. You also need to know what good points you wish to enhance! Sit down with a piece of paper and write a list; good points and bad points. Ask other people for their opinions but do be prepared for criticism!

Breeding a foal is not cheap and you should decide upon your budget. How much have you got to spend on the stud fee; what are the keep costs likely to be; what other costs are likely to be incurred such as vets bills, transportation costs and so on.

Having decided upon your aims and objectives the next thing to do is to decide upon a stallion. If you have a specific breed of horse in mind a good place to start looking is the breed society who should be able to

provide you with a list of stallions standing at stud. Or look in equine publications where the adverts will give you an opportunity to see what the stallion looks like.

Make a list of the stallions you like and which you feel will meet your criteria. Armed with this contact the studs and ask for stud cards and details of stud fees and keep costs. Once you have the stud cards make a short list of stallions and contact the studs and ask to visit to see the stallions; at the end of the day this is the best way of judging the stallion. Only by looking at him in the flesh can you assess his movement and temperament. Ask to see any progeny, as this will give you an idea of whether he stamps his offspring as being of a certain type. Ask about the stallion's fertility.

Check with the stud what testing is required prior to your mare's arrival at stud. The stud will normally ask that your mare be swabbed for CEM but they may also ask that she be tested clear of EVA. It is perfectly reasonable that a mare owner should ask that the stallion be swabbed for CEM and have been tested clear for EVA.

You also need to know what terms apply with regards to stud fees and pregnancy; e.g. no foal, no fee; no foal, free return; straight fee.

If you are planning to send your mare away to stud this visit will give you an opportunity to assess the stud facilities and to decide whether you would be happy sending your mare to them. If there are any aspects of the stud which you are not happy about raise them with the stud owners; now is the time to do this not when your mare is already there.

Many studs now offer chilled semen for Artificial Insemination. You may feel that your mare will be more settled if she stays at home in which case this is an option that you should give serious consideration.



# What Affects Gestation Length?

*by Heather Smith-Thomas*

A number of factors can influence length of gestation, including time of year the mare foals, age of the mare, uterine health, nutrition, and genetics (draft horses have shorter gestations than light horse breeds, and donkeys have longer gestations than mares, so a mule foal is often carried longer, even in a mare that normally has short gestation length).

Mares foaling in January, February, and March tend to go a few days longer than mares foaling in April, May, or June. You can alter this tendency somewhat by putting those mares under lights. This can trick the mare's body into thinking it's later in the season; with artificial lighting essentially extending the daylight hours, a mare foaling in February would have a short gestation similar to a mare foaling in May.

Older mares tend to carry foals a little longer than younger mares, although a first-time mother tends to have shorter gestation regardless of her age.

For instance, a 12-year-old mare having her first foal

might foal earlier than an 8-year-old mare having her fourth foal, but not always. The biggest factor is the mare's own pattern; most mares tend to follow the same gestation length throughout their broodmare career. "If she foaled early in the past, she'll probably do so again, if everything was normal when she foaled early. The same applies to a mare that goes longer than usual.

Mares that are nutritionally deprived might have slightly longer gestations. Uterine health can also be a factor. In a mare that has changes such as fibrosis or decreased gland density, gestation goes longer. The foal needs 'X' amount of nutrition to develop and is getting a decreased amount because the placenta does not have adequate attachment to the uterine lining. Thus, it takes longer to reach the end point.

Season of the year, and other factors, won't change the signs the mare shows you when she's ready to foal, but will alter the length of the pregnancy.



# ***What Stallion Owners Wished Mare Owners Knew***

## ***by Lydia Cunningham***

Through the years, these are some areas where I found mare owners are often lacking:

1. How to care for a pregnant mare vaccinations and feeding regime
2. Understanding the dangers of grazing fescue grass or hay in the last three months of pregnancy.
3. Mare owners need to be more diligent about understanding the owners and/or breeding facility where the stallion is managed is responsible and knowledgeable.
4. In most cases, if the stallion is managed properly, it is not the stallion's fault if the mare does not get bred. Mares can have many, many breeding issues.
5. Make sure the mare is ready for the breeding process by verifying she is breeding sound and ovulating on a fairly regular cycle.
6. If the mare owners want to save time and money, they need to keep up with the mare's cycle and bring her to the stallion at the appropriate time.
7. It is helpful if mare owners educate themselves on what to expect when having a foal on their property with dam and foal, so you don't have a little "big monster" on their hands when the "cute" wears off. This is one of the reasons that I produced my imprinting video "Creating Lasting Impressions".
8. Be responsible for what your are "creating" and putting on this earth. Carry through with training and have a plan.

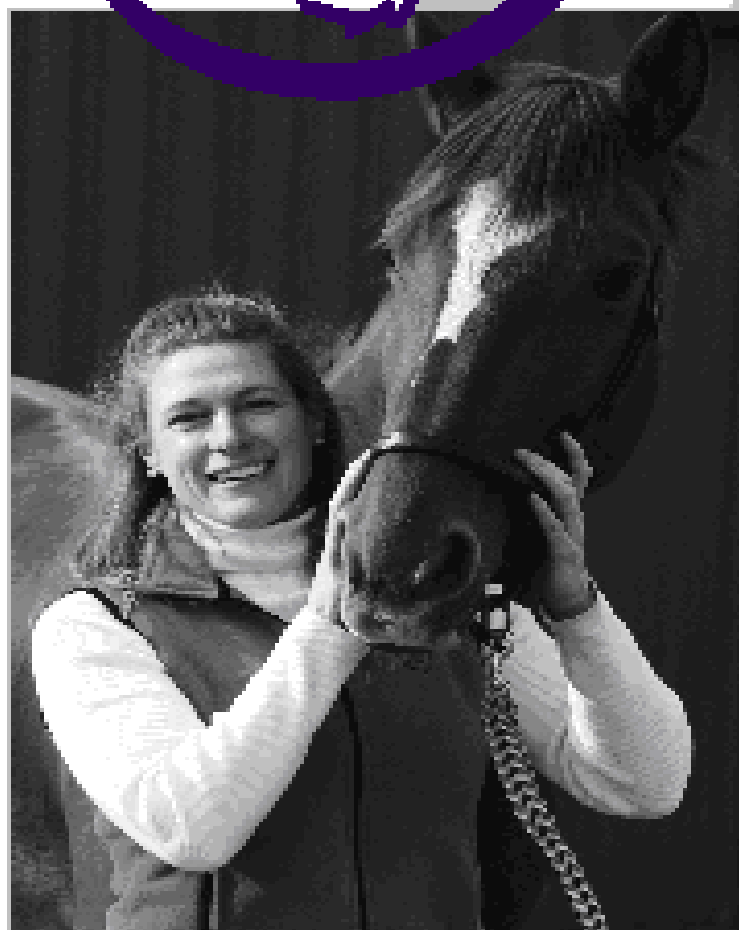
*Lydia Cunningham is the manager of Mountaintop Ranch Equine Center Elkton, Virginia*







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# Tomorrow's Great Horsemen

by Steve Edwards

Everyone knows the problems faced by the horse world today—too many horses for sale, low sales prices, and high feed costs lead the list of woes. Unfortunately, all “solutions” that are being offered come back to the same thing—reduce supply in hopes that it will lead to higher horse prices. Some even support expanded horse slaughter to reduce the supposed surplus of horses on the market. The horse industry cannot bleed itself into prosperity. Any real solution must focus on increasing demand for horses. To do so, we must not only think outside the box; we must throw that box away.

For example, for decades now the horse industry has focused on teaching young riders to become show competitors using the same tired old model—teach a child to ride by riding circles in a sandy ring on an aged “bomb proof” horse. That model does not attract new riders. We cannot count on Hollywood to produce the kinds of movies that used to draw kids to the horse lots.

What has been called the “Revolution in Horsemanship” gives us the ability to draw kids into the horse world, and even more importantly, produce first rate horsemen for the future. To do so we need to teach young children about natural horsemanship. I do not mean that we should teach young children about something that they can try to do when they grow up. I mean to teach children to safely handle, train, and ride the “surplus” of young horses that are on the market.

In order to do so we must recognize a little history. In most horse cultures of the past around the world, colt starting was a job delegated to the youngsters of the tribe. Here in Virginia, as recently as 75 years ago, farm boys were the first riders that unbroken horses had on their backs. Those kids did not have the advantage of knowing anything about natural horsemanship. “Ground work” to those farm boys meant chopping the weeds out of the peanut fields.

At Mill Swamp Indian Horses we have developed a program to teach natural horsemanship to children as young as five years old. As a child learns to ride she also learns the lynch pins of natural horsemanship, how to understand the horse's mind and how to effectively communicate with that horse. With my assistance many of my little riders have started their colts after age two and in short order had their horses trained well enough for long, hard trail rides through the woods and swamps of Tidewater.

My riders have demonstrated our colt starting techniques at clinics in several states. Perhaps their greatest achievement came in September of 2008. Nearly twenty of my riders took a day long, 46 mile ride on the colts and wild Spanish Corolla Mustangs that we worked together to train. One of my adult riders was on a Corolla mare captured less than thirty days before the big ride.

What we do in our program is not brain surgery. I have no doubt that anyone who understands natural horsemanship and kids could implement a similar program. Such a program sells horses and creates an entirely new market for future horse sales. Very few of my riders come from families with any horse experience. Our program takes kids out of the malls and away from the computer games and gives them something meaningful.

*“What we do in our program is not brain surgery. I have no doubt that anyone who understands natural horsemanship and kids could implement a similar program.”*



Mount Up Virginia is willing to break the mold and look to the future the Virginia horse industry. This magazine is more interested in looking for solutions than it is in moaning about the challenges that we all face. For that reason, I am delighted to accept this opportunity to develop a regular series on natural horsemanship, with an occasional look at how children can effectively learn to safely handle horses using natural horsemanship. The techniques that we will set out in future issues apply equally well whether the trainer is 13 or 35, or the horse is a gentle Quarter Horse colt or a wild Corolla Spanish Mustang.

Stay tuned.

*Steve Edwards is the owner of Mill Swamp Indian Horses near Smithfield, Virginia and is the author of "And a Little Child Shall Lead Them: Learning from Wild Horses and Small Children." He can be reached through [www.msindianhorses.com](http://www.msindianhorses.com)*



*Some of the Mill Swamp riders with the wild mustangs of the Outer Banks that they have trained.*

*Photo by Christi Craver*



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# Equine Tax Strategies

by Penny Carpenter

When running your horse business knowing and applying the auditing points covered in the IRS' Section 183 are so important. Your CPA and tax attorney may not have worked with the section but it's the section which can save you thousands in taxes.

Pay particular attention to operating in a completely "businesslike" manner. In *Davis v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue* United States Tax Court, 2000 WL 30726, March 27, 2000 the court decided in favor of the taxpayer finding that "Petitioners also spent large amounts of time operating the business, including personally constructing many of the facilities used by the (horse) business."

Beginning each year means reorganizing your records and making financial plans with your CPA or trusted accountant.

In addition, make sure you have a short meeting with your attorney to review not only wills and trusts but address every conceivable liability issue.

It's much better to plan now than get into a pickle with the IRS or a litigious person.

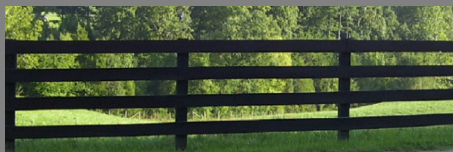
The importance of keeping and verifying horse recording documents is so important. Always make

sure that before you physically remove the horse from the seller's property that the proper papers are always included; never wait for them to be "sent;" be tough on this issue since without signed transfer papers on breeding stock you may have just bought a "twelve hundred pound lawn ornament."

As your business grows year by year there will just be more accumulated "stuff." From an inventory and insurance standpoint, you'll need to address values for show tack, trucks, trailers, farm tractors and additional office equipment. From experience I can tell you that in operating a training barn the acquisitions are so often overlooked until a theft or fire occurs.

A further suggestion would be to video your whole farm plus all the equipment then store the disc or tape in your safety deposit box.

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# Equine Health

## West Nile DNA Vaccine for Horses Introduced

### Edited Press Release

West Nile-Innovator DNA, a vaccine for horses to aid in the prevention of viremia caused by the potentially deadly West Nile virus, was launched by Fort Dodge Animal Health, a division of Wyeth, Dec. 4. Developed in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), this represents a tremendous milestone in DNA science and vaccine technology, as it is the first DNA vaccine of its kind ever registered and the first DNA vaccine fully licensed by the USDA.

“Fort Dodge, which has a long-standing commitment to innovative research and product development, recognized the significant value of DNA in the prevention of infectious diseases in animal populations, as well as humans, and worked with the CDC to develop this product,” said Steve Chu, DVM, PhD, executive vice president of Animal Health Research and Development, Fort Dodge Animal Health. “During this process, Fort Dodge made some groundbreaking discoveries that improved the preparation and formulation of the vaccine, enabling the successful development, testing and registration of the first product of its kind.”

Unlike conventional vaccines, which rely on the foreign proteins derived from disease-causing agents, West Nile-Innovator DNA uses purified DNA plasmids to stimulate an immune response.

West Nile-Innovator DNA contains no live or killed viruses, no live vector or viral proteins, and there is no risk of reversion to virulence.

West Nile-Innovator DNA provides a 12-month duration of immunity after two initial doses, and, according to field safety studies of 645 male and female horses of various breeds and ages, it is greater than 99% reaction-free. Annual revaccination requires one dose.

The new West Nile-Innovator DNA will be sold only to veterinarians, who are required to sign a user compliance agreement indicating they will use the vaccine within their practice where an established veterinarian-client-patient relationship exists. The company reserves the right to withhold product shipments to those in violation of the compliance agreement.

Since its discovery in the United States in 1999, West Nile virus has spread rapidly across the country, posing a major health threat to humans and horses. Infected horses have been reported in every state in the continental United States. In 2007, more than 500 cases of equine West Nile virus were reported.

“Even though mosquito-borne illnesses have not been headlining the news recently, it is more important than ever people vaccinate their horses against West Nile virus,” says Tom Lenz, DVM, vice president of Professional Services, Fort Dodge Animal Health. “There’s been a reduction in vaccination against West

## Value Shod



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**Brightwood, VA 22715**

*Graduate of Danny Ward Horseshoeing School*



Nile virus and whenever that occurs, you can expect to see a resurgence of disease because part of the horse population is not protected.”

In 2001, Fort Dodge introduced the first equine West Nile vaccine in the United States. In 2003, they introduced West Nile-Innovator combination vaccines for West Nile virus, Eastern and Western equine encephalomyelitis, and tetanus. Since the introduction of these products, millions of horses have been safely and effectively vaccinated against these life-threatening diseases.

*“Even though mosquito-borne illnesses have not been headlining the news recently, it is more important than ever people vaccinate their horses against West Nile virus.”*

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# Equine Health

## ***HYPP: Equine Hyperkalemic Periodic Paralysis***

### ***Edited Press Release***

#### ***What is HYPP?***

Hyperkalemic periodic paralysis (HYPP) is a muscular disease that affects both horses and humans. It is caused by a hereditary genetic mutation that disrupts a protein called a sodium ion channel, a tiny gateway in the membrane of muscle cells. The mutation affects the channel's normal opening and closing, such that uncontrolled sodium influxes occur. These influxes in turn change the voltage potential of muscle cells, causing uncontrolled muscle twitching or profound muscle weakness. High levels of potassium in the blood usually are present when the disruptions in the ion channel occur.



#### ***What are effects of HYPP?***

Horses with HYPP can experience unpredictable attacks of paralysis which, in severe cases, can lead to collapse and sudden death. The cause of death usually is cardiac arrest and/or respiratory failure. The disease is characterized by intermittent episodes of muscle tremors manifested by generalized or localized shaking, trembling and weakness. Occasionally, episodes are accompanied by respiratory noises resulting from paralysis of the muscles of the upper airway.

#### ***What is the origin of the genetic mutation causing HYPP?***

The original genetic mutation causing HYPP was a natural mutation that occurred as part of the evolutionary process. The majority of such mutations, which are constantly occurring, are not compatible with survival. However, the genetic mutation causing HYPP produced a functional, yet altered, sodium ion channel. This gene mutation is not a product of inbreeding. The gene mutation causing HYPP inadvertently became widespread when breeders sought to produce horses with heavy musculature, but this does not mean that all horses with well developed musculature possess the disease. The mutant gene causing HYPP presently has been identified in the descendants of the horse "Impressive". The American Quarter Horse Association has more than 102,000 descendants of "Impressive", the American Paint Horse Association and the Appaloosa Horse Club also have registered a substantial number of impressive-bred horses, but have no precise figure. In a recent study (Naylor et al, 1992. J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc., 3:340-343), it was found that over 50,000 registered Quarter Horses are positive for HYPP. Thus, the disease may be widespread, and many of the most successful show horses may be HYPP positive.

### ***What are the chances of a positive horse producing a positive foal?***

If a horse carrying one copy of the mutant gene - a heterozygote - is mated with an unaffected horse, there's a 50 percent chance that the foal will have HYPP.

If the horse carries two copies of the mutant gene - a homozygote - all offspring will be HYPP-positive, regardless of the other parent. If two heterozygotes are mated, there's a 75 percent chance that the foal will be affected. Two unaffected horses cannot produce a positive foal. Homozygous horses are affected more severely than heterozygous horses. Under ideal management practices, a mutant gene does not appear to have adverse effects, but stress and/or increased potassium in the serum can trigger clinical signs of muscle dysfunction.

### ***How is HYPP diagnosed?***

The best way to determine whether a horse is HYPP positive is a DNA test. The identification of this gene mutation is the basis for the DNA test used to diagnose HYPP. There is no cure for HYPP, but a consistent diet and regular exercise may minimize the risk of attack.





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# Care of the Newborn Foal

## Edited Press Release

### **Foal Behavior After Birth**

The foal will usually stand within 30 minutes, typically after several failed attempts. As soon as it is steady on its feet, often within an hour of birth, the foal will attempt to nurse. Teat-seeking behavior is persistent, even somewhat random, because the foal does not know exactly where the teat is located. However, with the gentle assistance of the mare, the foal will find the teat, quickly understand its purpose, and know how to suckle, a behavior that is instinctive in horses.

Within the first two hours, a foal starts breathing (within seconds), lifts its head (within 5 minutes), attempts to rise (within 10 minutes), stands (within 55 minutes), vocalizes (within 45 minutes), defecates meconium (within 30 minutes), suckles for the first time (within one hour), walks-runs for the first time (within 90 minutes), and takes its first nap (within two hours).

Understanding normal foaling behavior helps observers identify abnormal behavior or problems associated with foaling. Foals nurse frequently during the first few weeks of birth. Estimates range from one to two times per hour, with each session lasting about three minutes.

As foals age, the frequency and duration of suckling decreases and they begin to eat from other feed sources removing feedstuffs. Foals will remain close to their dams the first few weeks of life but will gradually explore their environment.

By the end of the third month, foals will spend 60 percent of their time with other foals. When the foal is 5 to 7 months of age, 70 percent of their nutrients will come from nonmilk sources. This is one reason it is recommended to wean foals at about 5 to 7 months of age.



### **Care of the Newborn Foal**

If you are present during the birth of the foal, your first step after the delivery is to make sure the foal is breathing. Quietly approach the foaling area and remove the birth sack (amnion) from the foal's head. If the foal is breathing, your job is complete and you should leave the foaling area and observe the mare and foal from a distance. This allows the mare and foal time alone to recover from the delivery and bond to each other socially. If the foal does not begin breathing on its own, tickle its nostril with a piece of grass or straw or blow into the foal's mouth to stimulate the respiratory reflex. If the foal still does not breathe, try rubbing the foal vigorously, squeezing its ribs or lifting it about one foot off the ground and dropping it. These procedures usually shock the foal slightly and initiate respiration.

A normal, healthy foal lifts its head and neck and rolls onto its chest within several seconds after delivery. Then the foal begins to make creeping movements away from its dam. If the mare has not stood up yet, the foal's movements usually break the naval (umbilical) cord. You should wait for either the mare

*Continued on Page 33*



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or foal to break the umbilical cord.

Do not cut the umbilical cord immediately after birth, because it is thought the foal receives blood from the placenta after birth. Cutting the cord before this blood transfer may result in circulatory problems in the foal. Foals with circulatory problems typically seem dumb and may have convulsions, leading to the common terms of “dummy” or “wanderer” foals for this condition.

Once the umbilical cord breaks, the stump should be dipped in a mild, 1 to 2 percent iodine solution. The iodine dries the umbilical stump and prevents bacteria from traveling up the stump and entering the foal's body. Bacteria that enter the foal through the umbilical stump cause a systemic infection known by various names, such as shigellosis, naval ill, joint ill, or polyarthritis. This infection causes severe illness or death in foals and causes swelling and deformities in the foal's joints.



You should examine the naval stump for several days after birth to make sure that it remains dry. Urine dripping from the stump indicates that the fetal urine passage from the bladder to the umbilical (the urachus) has not closed. Normally the urachus closes at birth. If it fails to close, in a condition called “persistent urachus,” the foal should be treated by a veterinarian.

Usually, foals stand within 1 hour after birth. During the first standing attempts, the foal is unsteady and constantly shifting its head, neck, and feet in an attempt to remain balanced. This unsteadiness is normal, and you should let the foal stand by itself. Lifting the foal onto its feet before its legs are strong enough to support it may strain tendons and ligaments, and it interferes with the bonding process between the mare and foal.

### Nursing

When it stands, the foal should begin nursing attempts. The foal instinctively searches at the junction of the mare's legs (both front and back) and body for the udder. The exploratory process involved with finding the udder is normal, and, again, you should resist the desire to “help” the foal. Human interference during initial nursing attempts actually may slow the foal's progress in finding the udder, and it interferes with the mare-foal bond. However, if the foal has not nursed by 2 hours after birth or if the mare aggressively rejects the foal's attempts to nurse, then it is time to interfere. Help the foal stand up and gently guide it to the mare's udder. Hand milk a few drops of colostrum (the mare's first milk) from the mare and coat your fingers and the mare's teats with it. Get the foal to suck your finger coated with colostrum and gradually move your finger beside the mare's teat. Then, slowly pull your finger out of the foal's mouth so the foal will switch to the teat. This procedure may have to be repeated several times before the foal makes the switch to the teat.

Occasionally a young mare or a mare with a swollen, sensitive udder will have to be restrained for several nursing sessions before she willingly lets the foal nurse. If the mare does not accept the foal after a few nursing bouts, you should call your veterinarian to tranquilize the mare. Keeping the mare tranquilized for a day or two solves most foal rejection problems. Remember to use extreme caution whenever you are working with a foal. Normally gentle, well-mannered mares can become very protective and aggressive if they think you are threatening their foal.

## **Colostrum**

It is important for the foal to receive colostrum soon after birth because it contains antibodies needed for disease protection during the first few months of the foal's life. These antibodies can be absorbed by the foal's intestinal tract for up to 36 hours after birth, but absorptive ability begins decreasing drastically at 12 hours after birth. Therefore it is important that the foal receive colostrum before this time has passed. Your veterinarian can perform a simple test to determine if the foal has received adequate protection from colostrum. This test should be done about 6 hours after birth. This gives you an opportunity to correct potential deficiencies in immunity during the time the foal can absorb antibodies from its intestinal tract.

To ensure that the mare has high amounts of antibodies in her colostrum, vaccinate her approximately 30 days before foaling. If you miss this vaccination time, make sure the foal is protected against tetanus by giving it a tetanus antitoxin injection at birth. The tetanus antitoxin is less efficient than immunity from colostrum because it protects the foal for only 2 to 3 weeks while its umbilical stump heals. Because the foal's immune system is not mature enough to use a tetanus toxoid vaccination until it is 3 to 5 months old, the foal is unprotected for 2-1/2 to 3 months if it does not receive protection from the colostrum.

Colostrum has a laxative effect on the foal, which helps it pass the fetal excrement (meconium). Most foals pass the meconium within 4 hours after birth. If the meconium is not passed, the foal can become constipated. A constipated foal frequently stops moving, squats, and raises its tail trying to defecate. Constipation can be relieved easily by giving the foal a warm, soapy water enema (1 to 2 cups) or a prepackaged human mineral oil enema. You should observe the foal for several days for signs of constipation and correct any problems.

## **Foal Health Problems**

Diarrhea in the newborn foal is not common and may indicate a serious illness in the foal. A squirting type of diarrhea can result in dehydration and death of a newborn foal in a few hours.

Immediately consult your veterinarian if your newborn foal develops diarrhea. However, mild diarrhea is common in older foals (1 to 2 weeks of age). This diarrhea often occurs during the mare's foal heat (a fertile heat beginning approximately 7 to 9 days after foaling) and is commonly termed "foal heat scours."

In the past, horse breeders thought hormonal changes in the mare's milk during foal heat caused diarrhea in the foal. Recent research has implicated an internal parasite (*Strongyloides westeri*) as the true cause of foal heat scours. This parasite is transmitted from the dam to the foal through the mammary gland. Foals

*Understanding normal foaling behavior helps observers identify abnormal behavior or problems associated with foaling.*

*Continued on Page 35*





begin to shed eggs in their feces 10 to 14 days after birth, resulting in scours that coincidentally occur with foal heat in the mare. If the foal is alert and nursing regularly, mild foal heat scours usually do not harm it. However if the foal stops nursing and becomes weak or dehydrated, consult your veterinarian immediately. You should keep the scoured areas around the foal's buttocks clean to prevent scalding of the skin. Wash the area with mild soap and water and coat it with petroleum jelly to prevent scalding.

Many foals have limb weaknesses or angular deformities at birth. These include knuckling over at the fetlock joint, weak pasterns in which the back of the fetlock touches the ground, knock knees, and crooked legs. Many of these conditions correct themselves with exercise. If your foal is born with less than straight legs, your veterinarian can assess the situation and recommend a treatment.

### **Care of Orphan Foals**

Orphan foals can result from death of the mare, inability of the mare to produce milk, or maternal rejection of the foal. Orphan foals can be raised successfully with some extra care. As with mothered foals, you should make sure the orphan receives colostrum soon after birth. If the foal cannot receive its mother's colostrum, try to locate frozen colostrum (large breeding farms and your veterinarian are good sources). Thaw the frozen colostrum at room temperature. Microwaving or heating the colostrum can destroy the protective antibodies in it. In the absence of any colostrum, your veterinarian can give the foal a plasma transfusion or an oral colostrum replacer to get antibodies into its system.

The best and easiest solution for an orphan is to transfer it to a nurse mare. To transfer the foal, disguise its odor by rubbing whiskey, linseed oil, the foster mother's milk, urine or feces, or any other liquid with a strong odor on the foal. Rub the same odor around the mare's nose. The nurse mare usually must be restrained or tranquilized for several days until she willingly lets the orphan nurse. Another solution is to let the foal nurse a milk goat. This is a good temporary solution, but most goats cannot produce enough milk daily to meet an older foal's nutritional needs. You will need an elevated area for the goat to stand on during nursing (a few bales of hay make a good temporary platform), and you should pad the goat's horns to prevent it from hurting the foal. If these options do not work you will have to bottle-feed or bucket-feed the foal with a mare's milk replacer.

There are several recipes for mare's milk replacer; however, the commercially available formulas are nutritionally balanced for the foal and easy to mix and use. Whenever possible, teach the foal to drink from a bucket. This will save you many hours of lost sleep and time away from work. To teach the foal to drink from a bucket, coat your finger with milk and allow the foal to suck your finger. Gradually immerse your finger in the bucket of milk. Waiting several hours between feedings so the foal is hungry often speeds up the learning process.

Some foals may be born with hernias (defects in the body wall that allow part of the intestines to protrude under the skin). Hernias occur most frequently at the naval and scrotal areas. Small hernias often correct themselves with time, and larger hernias may require surgical correction. Again, this is a situation that your veterinarian should assess and treat.

Occasionally the newborn foal's eyelids and lashes are turned in toward the eye rather than turned out as normal. This is a condition called "entropion" and causes tearing and irritation of the eye. If your foal has entropion, gently roll the eyelid out and consult your veterinarian for the proper eye ointment or

treatment that you can perform.

Another infrequent problem in newborn foals is caused by an incompatibility between blood groups of the mare and foal. This condition is known as "neonatal isoerythrolysis" or "jaundice foal." Antibodies to the foal's red blood cells are formed by the mare and secreted in her colostrum. When the foal nurses and absorbs these antibodies, its red blood cells are destroyed. Without prompt veterinary treatment, the foal becomes anemic and dies. If you suspect neonatal isoerythrolysis, prevent the foal from consuming colostrum until you can get a veterinarian to test for the condition.

If the foal does have to be bottle-fed, hold the bottle at the approximate height of a mare's udder so that the foal nurses in a natural position. If possible, use a bottle holder so that the foal does not assume you are its mother. You want the foal to learn it is a horse and to respect humans. You should quickly and consistently discipline the foal for inappropriate behavior (biting, kicking, shoving, rearing) directed toward you. Orphans that are bucket-fed or bottle-fed and those nursing a milk goat should be introduced to other horses as soon as possible so they will develop normal equine social behavior. Putting an old, quiet mare or gelding in the pen or stall next to the orphan promotes normal social behavior. If your older horse can be trusted not to hurt the foal, turn them out together as soon as possible.

*It only takes a few minutes to perform these management procedures, and then you can relax and enjoy your new foal knowing that you have done your best to ensure its well-being.*

*Continued on Page 38*



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A healthy foal nurses from its mother up to seven times an hour for 60 to 90 seconds each time. A newborn orphan should be fed at least every 1 to 2 hours during their first week of life. Free-choice milk intake is recommended for healthy foals. During the first 2 days of life, a foal should drink about 10 to 15 percent of its body weight daily. For the next 5 days the foal's intake should increase to 25 percent of its body weight daily. When either bottle-feeding or bucket feeding foals, make sure that your feeding equipment is clean and that milk does not sour between feedings. Orphan foals always should have access to water and salt.

Orphans should be offered grain, milk replacer pellets, and hay after a few days of life. However, the foal may not consume much solid food until it is about 1 month old.

### **New Foal Checklist**

Several simple post-foaling management practices will help ensure the health of your mare and foal. A checklist follows:

- 1. Make sure the foal is breathing.***
- 2. Put iodine on the foal's umbilical stump.***
- 3. Make sure the foal (including orphan foals) receives colostrum soon after birth.***
- 4. Make sure the foal is protected against tetanus, either through the colostrum or by a tetanus anti-toxin injection.***
- 5. Make sure the foal passes the meconium and treat constipation or diarrhea promptly.***
- 6. Check the umbilical stump for several days for the presence of urine.***
- 7. Check that the foal's eyelids and lashes are turned outward.***
- 8. Follow your veterinarian's advice about any limb deformities and hernias.***
- 9. Make sure the mare expels the afterbirth and check it for completeness.***
- 10. Check the mare for several days after foaling for any sign of reproductive tract infection.***

To horse owners unfamiliar with raising foals, this post-foaling checklist may seem like a large amount of work. However, it only takes a few minutes to perform these management procedures, and then you can relax and enjoy your new foal knowing that you have done your best to ensure its well-being.

# KIDS CORRAL



*A great photo of 13 year old Beth Stieffenhofer competing on her Quarter Horse "Red Thunder" at the 2008 Shenandoah County Fair!*



*Frigid temperatures did not deter little Miss Savanna Grough as she competed in the Pee-Wee division on 12/6/08.*

# KIDS CORRAL



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# Calendar of Events

January/February 2009

## January 2009

**January 10, 2009**

Bedford, VA  
Broken Bow Arena  
Wesley Humphries  
434-332-5591

IBRA Open, Youth, & Masters approved.  
\$250 added. Starts at 11:00am.

**January 15-18**

Stonewall Country Horse Show "A"  
Virginia Horse Center

**January 29-February 1**

Stonewall Country Horse Show "A"  
Virginia Horse Center

## February 2009

**February 7, 2009**

Bedford, VA  
Broken Bow Arena  
Wesley Humphries  
434-332-5591

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**February 21, 2009**

LoneStar Championship Rodeo  
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## **March 2009**

**March 6-7, 2009**

Turnball Brokerage Horse Sale  
Virginia Horse Center  
Lexington, VA

**March 7, 2009**

Bedford, VA  
Broken Bow Arena  
Wesley Humphries  
434-332-5591

IBRA Open, Youth, & Masters approved.  
\$250 added. Starts at 11:00am.

## **Look for the upcoming March/April Issue**

### **Virginia Trail Rides:**

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### **SHOW TIME:**

*Show time is just around the corner and soon it will be that time of year, horse lovers will be stirring with excitement... Looking for the next BIG show! This issue will feature many western shows, barrel races, team penning events, reining information, etc. and much, much more.*

*We are excited about the March/April issue and you should be too, because regardless if you prefer the simple life of pleasure and trail riding or if you like the bright lights and bling, bling, there is sure to be something in the next issue for you or your horse lover.*

***But, until then, HAPPY NEW YEAR!***

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This guy will be a tremendous performance horse; he's bred to do anything...and he'll look good doing it, too! George is growing up to be a handsome, stout, very correct boy: Lovely legs and bone, huge hip and body, too; nice, long neck. His sire is a full brother to the top, highly-proven performance show geldings, Used To Be A Dandy (many times (yes!) National and World Champion) and Lins Dandy Lad (500+ ApHC points) --- George could most easily follow right along in their foot-steps. \$1200.00



Santana \$1,650  
[www.circlep-ranch.com](http://www.circlep-ranch.com)  
540-392-2734 or 540-357-0583

Super Cute bay/wht 15h paint with a great personality and ground manners. Very easy to catch, load, crosstie, etc. Sweet and slow. Great on trails. UTD shots/shoes. Lots of fun to work with.



Miss Belle \$1,850  
[www.circlep-ranch.com](http://www.circlep-ranch.com)  
540-392-2734 or 540-357-0583

QH, 5 years old, Belle is a beautiful bay with a great personality. She loves attention and is fun to ride, very athletic. Easy to catch, load, crosstie, etc. UTD shots & shoeing. Great trail horse with potential for barrels or poles.





Gold Dry San \$1,950  
www.circlep-ranch.com  
540-392-2734 or 540-357-0583

Very handsome 15.2h Dapple Palomino. He is great on trails/crosses water, etc. Great personality and ground manners. Loves attention. Easy to clip, bathe, shoe, etc. UTD shots/shoes.



Shiraz \$5,500  
www.moonlightacres.net  
540-290-0489 or 540-886-3325

Shiraz 6yr 15h TB/welshx black bay mare that has been nicely started under saddle. She has a solid w/t/c and started over fences. Started hunting second flight taking an occasional small fence here and there, really doing well and liking it a lot. Would make a great pony club prospect. Her mother was an eventer. She is priced to sell.



Lil Zans Jessie James \$2,500  
Contact Dorinda at: 276-228-4822  
or 276-620-4776

Lil Zans Jessie James - Bay Quarter Horse Gelding. Jessie" is a very athletic colt. He has a gorgeous head and neck and a very nice shoulder and hip. His legs are straight and clean and he has a good foot on him. This colt is naturally athletic and picks up both leads. He stands to have his feet trimmed and has been started under saddle. This guy is BIG--he's already pushing 15 hands with excellent muscle and conformation. He is a very pretty mover with an awesomely collected lope and beautiful jog and trot. \$2,500

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Our goal is to continually produce a product that horse lovers will desire to keep, unlike tossing out their newspapers and other newspaper quality publications. That is why we print vibrant color photos on the highest quality paper. If you would like information or rates on advertising your horses for sale please email our sales department:  
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