

THE FOALING PROCESS

OBSERVATIONS:

Udder development

- variable with respect to foaling time.
- usually waxes within 48hrs
- unpredictable

Pelvic ligaments and muscles around tail

- usually within last 48hrs marked Softening/slackening

Vaginal Conformation

- usually relaxes and elongates within the last 12-24hrs
- cervical plug (light pink mucoid discharge) generally occurs within the last 24hrs – do not always see it.

Behavioural changes

- usually reduction in appetite and restless or “nesting” behaviour occurs in last 24hrs.
- should remember that majority of mares foal between midnight and dawn.
- any mare foaling in daylight should be regarded as possibly in trouble anyway.

The Foaling Process – General Principles

In horses generally a rapid process ie. A few minutes to ½ hr.

Very powerful violent and unforgiving if allowed to go wrong.

Once it begins – should be progressive. If there is lack of progress for 5-10mins it may be an indicator of trouble – phone the vet for preliminary discussion.

The Process

Mares will often foal laying down, but not all the time. The mare will begin to increase in restlessness, and get up and down.

They will usually settle on the ground and begin contractions – first thing to appear is a fluid bag.

A few strains- then there should be one or two feet – either together or close to it.

Front feet with soles down is normal. If the feet are upside down CALL THE VET NOW!!

Feet will come out 20-40cm and then the muzzle should appear, at approximately knee level. Things should be progressing reasonably rapidly from this point.

If there is no progress for 5mins-touch base with your vet.

90% expulsion usually