

reproduction services



■ Pre-Breeding Examination

We recommend that your mare is examined as early as possible in the season to assess her suitability for breeding and to identify any problems which may affect her ability to conceive. It is especially relevant for maiden mares and those that have had reproductive problems in previous years.

This will include a general health examination, assessment of her vulval conformation, evaluation of her vagina and cervix and an ultrasound scan of her uterus and ovaries.

We recommend, and a lot of studs will insist on, a **clitoral swab** and a **blood sample** being taken from your mare prior to her entering the stud. The swab is screened for the venereal disease **contagious equine metritis** and the blood sample is screened for **infectious equine anaemia** and **equine viral arteritis**. Samples must be received by an approved laboratory within 48hrs of collection therefore we recommend sampling is done Monday – Thursday to allow for delays with the post. Laboratory certificates are issued within 7 – 10 days and will be required **before** admission to stud.

■ Management of Mares for Natural Service

Mares managed carefully prior to covering can achieve pregnancy rates of 75% and above with natural service.

Mares will often ovulate several days after they are observed in heat and standing for the stallion, where only a single service is used this can lead to a reduction in conception rates. Sequential scanning of the mare's uterus and ovaries can allow us to better predict the timing of ovulation. Hormones can be given to adjust your mare's cycle. They can be used to bring her into season at a particular time, from which we can advise the optimal time for covering and to manipulate ovulation time for insemination. This is especially useful if you are looking to travel the mare some distance to stud and bring her straight home.

■ Artificial Insemination (AI)

Wright & Morten is one of a limited number of practices on the **BEVA AI list of practice experienced in the use of chilled and frozen semen**.

AI is commonly used for non-thoroughbreds in Europe and America. It has many advantages over natural service: reducing risk of injury to mare, stallion and handlers, allowing a greater choice of stallion including those from continental Europe, improving conception rates in mares susceptible to post covering uterine infection.

Careful management is essential to maximise conception rates. Success relies on timing insemination as close to ovulation as possible. This is achieved with sequential ultrasound scans and the use of hormones to manipulate her cycle. While this can be achieved at home, we recommend admitting the mare to the hospital at Somerford for optimal management.

You have the option of using either **chilled** or **frozen** semen. Pregnancy rates of between 45 – 70% can be achieved with chilled and up to 45% with frozen. Where you have a choice of frozen or chilled, it is important to look at fertility rates for your chosen stallion with both mediums before making your decision. When ordering semen most studs require you to order and pay in advance and will need 24 hours notice for a semen collection. It is helpful if we have contact details for your chosen stud and it is important for chilled semen to know whether they can arrange collection and next day delivery over a weekend.

■ Pregnancy Diagnosis

We advise the **first pregnancy scan** takes place **14 – 16 days** after covering with a **second scan** at **20 days**; this detects pregnancy and allows for the identification and management of twin embryos. A **third scan** at **30 days** is recommended to ensure normal progression of the pregnancy.

■ Reduced Fertility in the Mare

Unexplained and persistent failure to conceive should be investigated as early in the season as the problem is detected. In addition to ultrasound examination, we can perform swabs, smears and biopsies of the uterine lining and visually examine the uterus endoscopically.

■ Management of the In-Foal Mare

This can be tailored to your individual requirements and we are happy to advise on all aspects of the pregnant mare including nutritional requirements and the foaling process itself. Routine vaccination and worming are essential. We recommend the mare is vaccinated for influenza and tetanus in the last 6 weeks to ensure maximum possible immunity for these diseases is passed to the foal. Equine Herpes vaccination is also recommended at 5, 7 and 9 months of pregnancy in order to reduce the risk of abortion.

■ Post Foaling Checks

We recommend examining the mare and foal as soon after birth as possible to check both for complications. The mare is examined for vaginal tears and to ensure she has plenty of colostrum. This is the first milk which is essential for the foal to receive in the first 6 – 8 hours, as it contains lots of antibodies and energy. The afterbirth should be passed within 3 – 4 hours and should be retained for examination to ensure it has come away completely. Veterinary advice should be taken if the mare fails to cleanse in this time. The foal is examined to make sure it is healthy, with no congenital abnormalities and that, depending on time post foaling, the foal has stood and suckled. A blood sample can be taken from the foal 24 hours after birth to test for optimum immune transfer. We will be able to advise you at this stage on management of mare and foal in the first few weeks of life.

dedicated equine healthcare

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