Loomis Basin Equine
MEDICAL GROUP

FAQ's for Breeding Your Mare

I'd like to breed my mare this season. When will I know she is ready to breed?

Mares are seasonal breeders. If they have not been under lights for 16 hours per day in a barn setting since December 1st, most mares will not have a normal breedable cycle until March or sometimes April. You may notice a prolonged "heat like" period earlier than this, but this is often a transitional cycle that does not have a normal ovulation and therefore is not a good cycle for breeding. If you are unsure when your mare is in her cycle we can perform a trans-rectal ultrasound to give you a better idea.

What is a pre-breeding examination?

A pre-breeding exam consists of evaluation of the mare's overall health and soundness, an evaluation of her external vulvar conformation, and a trans-rectal palpation and ultrasound of her ovaries, cervix and uterus. We may also recommend a speculum examination or a digital examination to evaluate the vaginal vault and cervix, a uterine culture and cytology to evaluate the uterus for signs of infection or inflammation, and in some cases a uterine biopsy to evaluate the uterus for signs of inflammation, infection or scarring.

When should I bring my mare in and drop her off for breeding?

If your mare lets you know when she is in heat with behavior changes (tail raising, "winking", frequent urination, squealing, increased interest in stallions or geldings), we ask that you bring the mare in as you see these early heat signs start to develop. This means the mare should be getting dropped off during early estrus which allows her to settle in, and allows us to follow her cycle for a day or two prior to ordering cooled semen shipments or preparing to breed with frozen semen.

If you don't know when your mare is in heat (silent heat), you can bring her in anytime (or schedule an ambulatory call) and we can evaluate her cycle with trans-rectal ultrasound. Often we can then help determine when the mare will come into estrus or give her some medications to help the mare come into estrus.

How long will my mare need to stay at the clinic?

If the mare gets dropped off during early estrus, and the cycle proceeds normally, the mare will have been bred and ovulated with in 3-7 days. Some cycles can be abnormally long or slow, especially early in the breeding season, so some mares are with us much longer before they are bred.

Once the mare has been bred and we have documented ovulation, you can then decide if you would like to leave her at the clinic for an additional 2 weeks until her pregnancy exam at 14-17 days, or take her home during this time.

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FAQ's for Breeding Your Mare cont'd...

I'm interested in breeding my mare with frozen semen this year. How does this differ from breeding with cooled semen?

Breeding with frozen semen has become much more popular and much more successful in recent years. Breeding with frozen semen requires more precise insemination timing around ovulation, and therefore a breeding package with frozen semen costs more that with cooled semen.

Frozen semen is typically sent "per dose", and it is best if the stallion manager sends a minimum of 2 doses of frozen semen per mare per cycle.

Mares are more likely to develop inflammation after breeding with frozen semen than with cooled semen (due to increased concentration), so often mares bred with frozen semen will require a uterine flush(es) after breeding.

When will my mare need a pregnancy exam after breeding?

14-17 days
The first pregnancy check we recommend is at 14-17 days post ovulation. This will be the first opportunity to determine if your mare is pregnant, and is very important to rule out twins.

28-32 days
The next pregnancy check we recommend is at 28-32 days. 25% of pregnancies can be lost/resorbed between 14 and 30 days so it is important to re-evaluate the pregnancy at this time. It is a second opportunity to rule out twins, and we should be able to image the heartbeat of the embryo at this check.

60-90 days
This pregnancy check is optional, but is another chance to confirm that your mare has maintained her pregnancy beyond the early stage.

150 days (5 months)
This pregnancy check can be the first trans-abdominal pregnancy check, although we can still confirm the pregnancy with a trans-rectal examination as well. This is the time when we give the first Pregnant Mare Rhino vaccination as well.

After 280 days (9 months)
Additional pregnancy check at 9 months to determine if the fetus is facing the right direction and to give the final 9 month Pregnant Mare Rhino vaccination.

Prior to foaling
mares that come into the clinic for foaling out will often undergo a full trans-abdominal ultrasound of the placenta, fetus and fetal fluids to evaluate the health and well being of the foals prior to foaling out.