



Martholme Farm
Great Harwood
Lancashire
BB6 7UJ
Tel. 01254 888600
Fax. 0871 5289927
www.equine-vet.co.uk

Breeding from your Mare – A.I. or Natural Service

Is Breeding the Best Thing for Your Mare?

Many mare owners do not realize the implications of getting a mare in foal: It could involve a lot of expense and does not always lead to a live foal eleven months later. Foaling involves a risk to the mare's health. It is not wise to breed from a mare simply because she is not being ridden or used for anything else. You must also make sure you have the facilities, expertise and time to look after and rear the foal properly.

Choosing a Stallion

Always look at your mare's good and bad points and try to find a stallion to compliment these. Use a stallion standing at a well established stud and do not be tempted by the offer of a friend's colt down the road. If you opt to use AI, you are not limited to stallions within reasonable traveling distance.

Advantages of A.I

- No need to travel the mare (Particularly useful for mares who are difficult to transport)
- No livery fees at stud
- Less risk of injury to the mare
- Less risk of disease transmission (both venereal infections and other disease such as flu, ringworm and strangles)
- No need to trust anyone else to look after your mare properly
- Can be beneficial in some mares with fertility problems
- Allows the use of stallions from abroad and even some that are no longer living

Disadvantages of A.I

- Not available with all stallions
- Involves more veterinary input and therefore greater vet costs (Particularly with frozen semen)
- Slightly lower conception rate means it may take longer to get your mare in foal
- Cost of collecting semen, shipping it overnight and rental of the chilled container can considerably add to the overall cost

What Is Involved in A.I?

Because the sperms in chilled and frozen semen have a shorter lifespan than in semen straight from the stallion, it must be put into the mare at just the right time. To know when the time is right, your mare will require scanning frequently once she is in season. This often means scanning every day and in the case of frozen semen possibly twice a day. This allows us to predict when your mare will ovulate (release the egg). It is possible to use hormone injections or implants to stimulate your mare to ovulate. These obviously add to the cost but may reduce overall costs as they can cut down on the number of times we need to scan. We will liaise with the stud to request that they collect the semen and send it so it arrives at the optimum time for insemination. Even if everything goes according to plan, many mares will not conceive to the first insemination and the whole process must be repeated at her next season. Some mares have problems such as fluid retention in the uterus or uterine infection which may need treatment if they are to stand any chance of getting in foal.

In order to carry out scanning we require appropriate conditions. If conditions are not suitable at your premises we will require your mare to be transported to somewhere more suitable. We consider the safety of the vet, handlers and mare to be of paramount importance.

Pregnancy Scanning

We recommend at least three scans to check for pregnancy, ensure there are no twins and monitor the development of the embryo. These are best done at:

1. 14-15 days after insemination
2. 22-26 days after insemination
3. 32-34 days after insemination

It is sensible to have another scan at around 100 days to check that the foetus is still alive and is developing normally.

Costs

Before opting for A.I, it is worth costing out the procedure in comparison with sending your mare to stud. Use the tables below to help you do this:

A.I. (Using Chilled Semen)	COST
Stud fee (Usually £300-1000)	
Semen collection charge (Usually £20-50 per collection. Average of 2 collections needed)	
Semen shipping costs (Usually £25-100 per shipping. Average of 2 journeys required)	
Rental costs for shipping container (Usually £0-5 per day. Average of 3-10 days)	
Veterinary fees (See below)	£400*
Other fees (eg. Transport to AI centre, vaccination against EHV)	
TOTAL	

NATURAL SERVICE	COST
Stud fee (Usually £300-1000)	
Transport to and from stud	
Livery fees (Usually £3-10 per days. Average of 40 days required)	
Veterinary fees (See below)	£200*
Other costs (eg. Vaccination against EHV, mare handling fees)	
TOTAL	

* Veterinary fees calculated on the basis of 12 ultrasound scans for AI and 5 scans for natural service, cost of swab and lab fees and hormone injection for AI. Visit charges will vary according to the number of mares scanned and timing of visits. If your mare is A.I'd at home, visit costs are likely to be more than the estimate.. Veterinary costs may vary considerable from the above estimates depending on how easily and quickly your mare conceives and whether any special treatments are required. AI using frozen semen involves a different set of costs – Please contact us if you require advice.

Further Information

It is worth discussing any queries with your chosen stud as different studs operate in different ways. Please contact us on 01254 888600 if you need any further advice.