

First rule of foaling- Don't Panic!

95% of mares can foal on their own with little assistance from humans. However, advance planning can help prevent problems. **Vaccinations** one month prior to foaling help insure high levels of IgG (antibodies) in the colostrum.

Provide a **safe place** to foal – outside on a clean grassy pasture is acceptable. In freezing weather, provide a clean stall with clean straw (not sawdust). A 14 x 14 stall is ideal.

Monitor your mare's progress. Signs of impending parturition (birth):

- Filling of the udder (two to six weeks)
- Distention of the teats (four to six days)
- Waxing of the teats (one to four days)
- Obvious dripping of milk (one to two days)
- Other signs include: Muscles around tail sag and vulva sags to almost twice its normal length.

If your home (or camper) is close to the foaling stall, inexpensive wireless video monitors are available.

Another alternative is the Foal Alert system. This features a transmitter sutured to the mare providing an electronic page when the mare begins to foal. Visit www.foalert.com.

Preparing for birth: **Wash the mare's** udder, vulva and hindquarters with a mild soap and rinse thoroughly. Many infections can be transmitted to a newborn foal at time of nursing. Wrap the mare's tail with a clean wrap.

Signs of labor:

- May act colicky and paw the ground
- May sweat around neck and flanks
- May urinate frequently
- May pace, lie down and get up frequently

Normal delivery of the foal begins with a silvery-gray bag. Inside the bag are the front hooves with the bottom of the hooves pointing towards the mares hocks and closely followed by the foals' head resting between its knees.

Red Bag Delivery

If delivery starts with a "**red bag**", there is a problem. Promptly making a hole in this red bag with a ball point pen or similar object should reveal the silvery-gray bag underneath and allow foaling to proceed normally.

If everything is lined up, then sit back and watch. Resist the temptation to "help". Do not pull on the foal.

April showers brings INSECT season.
Next month we will cover *Insect-Borne Disease: Potomac Horse Fever, West Nile, Eastern/Western Encephalitis.*

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Prevention of problems – two items are key

- Prompt nursing will help ensure adequate immunity through the colostrum. This prevents many problems.
- Treat navel repeatedly over the first couple days with mild disinfectant (tamed iodine or chlorhexadine solution).

Save the placenta for your veterinarian to examine. Pick it up using a plastic bag, do not use a pitchfork.

- If the placenta has not passed within 3 hours, contact your veterinarian.

Conversations over the phone may prevent problems.

The morning following foaling is a good time for a **neo-natal exam** by your veterinarian which may include: examination of the mare and foal, antibiotics for potential infection, an IgG test to measure antibody transfer and examination of the placenta to ensure it is complete.

National Animal Identification System

Step One: Premise Registration

The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) has implemented the first major step in the National Animal Identification System (NAIS).

What does this mean for livestock exhibitors this year?

- All animals showing at 2008 County, State, 4H and FFA fairs are required to have a PREMISE identification number.
- The Premises ID number is for the location where the animals are produced and/or raised.
- This includes family farms, boarding facilities and leased animals.

All premises where these animals are kept need to be registered. That registration number will serve as the ID number.

Which species are included in NAIS?

Cattle & Bison	Swine	Sheep
Goats	Equine	Poultry
Aquaculture	Ratites	
Llamas and Alpacas	Deer, Elk & other cervids	

Eventually each individual animal will need its own personal ID number (i.e. leg band, ear tag or microchip) but not at this time.

NAIS is hoping that through these three major steps, it will be easier to track dangerous disease outbreaks and warn premises nearby of potential threats.

More information can be located at www.agr.state.il.us/premiseID

Contact us for more information at
(877) 949-2144.

Visit our website:

www.oakwoodvets.com

