

Links

Newfoundland Pony Society:

www.newfoundlandpony.com



For more information, contact your Regional Veterinarian, the Newfoundland Pony Society or the Animal Health Division.

Other information pamphlets are available online from the Department of Natural Resources at:

www.nr.gov.nl.ca/agric/

Publication: HA 00-003
Last Revised: March 2010



Department of Natural Resources
Animal Health Division
P.O. Box 7400
St. John's, NL
A1E 3Y5

t 709.729.6879
f 709.729.0055

animalhealthdivision@gov.nl.ca



Reproduction of the Newfoundland Pony: Foaling



Introduction

There are currently less than 400 registered Newfoundland Ponies. To ensure the survival of this heritage breed, it is essential that we optimize the health and survival of all Newfoundland Pony foals. Owners of breeding mares should become familiar with all aspects of equine reproduction. This pamphlet is the second of three on reproduction in the Newfoundland Pony and will deal with parturition, or the birthing process.

Preparation for Foaling

The average gestation in mares is 340 days. A noticeable enlargement in the udder occurs 2-3 weeks before foaling. The teats become distended with milk and have a waxy appearance at the ends, usually 2-14 days before parturition. Other changes that may be noticed during the several weeks preceding foaling include relaxation of the muscles and ligaments around the base of the tail, a softening of the vulva and a gaunt appearance in the flank area.

Mares should be moved to the foaling stall 3-4 weeks before the due date. This allows for the mare to become comfortable in the new surroundings and for her immune system to react to any new organisms. The stall should be large (at least 12 feet by 12 feet), clean and quiet. During this time the mare's perineal area, hind legs and udder should be washed regularly.

In warmer summer months, mares can safely foal outdoors provided that conditions are favourable. Mares should be in a clean and dry grassy pasture. The area should be quiet and inaccessible to other animals, except for a few other broodmares. The pasture should be small enough to allow for observation without disturbing the mare.

The Foaling Process

Stage 1

Stage 1 generally begins at least 2 hours prior to foaling with signs of restlessness. The mare may paw at the ground, swish her tail, bite or kick at her flank and begin to sweat. Milk may begin to leak from the teats. Stage 1 ends when the membranes break and water escapes from the vulva.

During Stage 1, mares should be observed from a distance. Disturbances may delay foaling.



Stage 2

Stage 2 can last between 20 and 70 minutes and ends with the delivery of the foal. The mare generally lies down for Stage 2 and is sweating. She may roll or repeatedly sit up and lie down in an attempt to find a comfortable position. The uterine and abdominal contractions are extremely strong. Usually 5-10 minutes following the release of fluids, the amniotic sac will be visible at the vulva. As the foal is pushed through the birth canal, the 2 front feet will be visible through the sac. The sac may rupture during delivery. If it fails to rupture and the foal is struggling, the sac should be removed from the foal's nose.

Veterinary assistance should be sought when:

- Stage 2 has not progressed and 15 minutes has elapsed since the release of fluid.
- Any indication of a mal-positioning, such as the presentation of only one foot or the failure of the head to appear.
- Both feet have presented but there is heavy straining for 10 minutes and no progress.
- Evidence of extreme mare discomfort such as repeated rolling or shifting of position.

Stage 3

Stage 3 lasts approximately 3 hours and ends with the passage of the afterbirth. Veterinary attention should be sought if 12 hours has passed without passage of afterbirth. If afterbirth is retained beyond this time, there is risk of complications, such as infection in the uterus and laminitis, a serious inflammation of the feet.

More Information

Further information can be obtained from the first (Breeding and Broodmare Management) and the third (Care of the Newborn Foal and Postpartum Mare) pamphlets; from the many magazines and books on horse care, from your Regional Veterinarian and from knowledgeable horse people in your area.