

Janet & John

natural products for wonderful creatures



Preparing for a Safe and Successful Foal Delivery using Janet and John products

CARING FOR THE FOALING MARE AND NEWBORN

If your mare has made it through 11 months of pregnancy, you're almost home free. Labor and delivery, while momentous, are generally uneventful. In most cases, you will simply need to be a quiet observer--if, that is, you are lucky enough to witness the birth. Mares seem to prefer to foal at night in privacy, and apparently have some control over their delivery.

A SAFE PLACE TO FOAL

What your mare *will* need, however, is a clean, safe, quiet place to foal. Horses have been giving birth on the open range for eons, and this is still an acceptable choice. Allowing the mare to foal in the pasture even has some advantages. An open grassy area is likely to be cleaner than a stall and provides a healthy environment with adequate room to foal. You won't have to worry about the mare crowding into a corner or foaling too close to a wall. However, many owners prefer to confine the mare to observe her progress.

Should you choose to foal your mare in a stall, the stall should have walls and a floor that can be readily cleaned with J.J. Stable and Box wash at the recommended dilution and disinfected with J.J. Stable disinfectant at recommended dilution. Dirt or day floors make sanitation more difficult. Also, provide adequate clean bedding. Straw (particularly wheat straw) is preferable to shavings, as it won't cling to the wet newborn or mare the way small wood particles can. Remove manure and soiled bedding promptly, and disinfect the stall between deliveries again using J.J. Stable and Box disinfectant at the recommended dilution.

PREPARING FOR BIRTH

Most mares foal without difficulty. It usually is best to allow the mare to foal undisturbed and unassisted. If a problem becomes apparent, contact your veterinarian immediately.

What you can do:

- Ensure that all Personal attending the birth wash their hands beforehand with J.J. Deodorising Hand Soap and apply J.J. Hand Gel to hands and forearms. Allow to dry completely. Every attempt must be made to prevent the transfer of microbes to the mare and foal during this critical period.
- Keep a watch or clock on hand so you can time each stage of labor. When you're worried or anxious, your perception of time becomes distorted. The watch will help you keep accurate track of the mare's progress during labor. Take written notes so that you won't have to rely on memory alone.
- Wrap the mare's tail with a clean wrap when you observe the first stage of labor. Be sure that the wrap is not applied too tightly or left on too long as it can cut off circulation and permanently damage the tail.
- Wash the mare's vulva and hindquarters with J.J. Main and Tail Shampoo and rinse thoroughly.
- Clean and disinfect the stall using J.J. Stable and Box Disinfectant at the correct dilution. Provide adequate bedding.

POSTPARTUM CARE FOR MARE AND FOAL

In the excitement of birth, it is important to remember some tried and true guidelines:

- Allow the foal time to break the fetal membranes. Once the foal breaks through, be sure it is breathing.
- Generally, it is not recommended to cut or break the umbilical cord. If it has not broken during delivery, it will usually break when the mare or foal gets up. The cord should break at a site approximately one inch from the foal's abdomen, where the cord's diameter is slightly narrower than the remainder of the cord. If it is necessary to manually separate the cord, it should be held firmly on either side of the intended break site, then twisted and pulled to separate. (Never cut the cord!) Twisting and pulling of the cord stimulate closure of the umbilical vessels and reduce the likelihood of hemorrhage from the cord stump. If bleeding persists following cord separation, pressure can be applied to the stump for several minutes by squeezing with a thumb and finger.
- Encourage the mare and foal to rest as long as possible. Give them an opportunity to bond undisturbed.
- Treat the umbilical cord with J.J. Wound Disinfectant, soon after the cord breaks and for several days thereafter to prevent bacterial infection.
- Observe the mare and foal closely for the next 24 hours.

A FINAL NOTE

Nature has provided an efficient system for the mare to deliver and care for her young. Be a prepared and informed owner so you can enjoy the miracle of birth, keep your anxiety in check, and help the new mother and foal get off to a great start.