

SHIRE HORSE SOCIETY



PREPARING YOUR MARE FOR STUD

SHOULD I BE BREEDING A FOAL?

BEFORE BREEDING A FOAL ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

1. Is my mare suitable?

- a) Is she old enough and mature enough to produce and raise a foal without interfering with her own growth and development?
- b) Does she have good conformation?
- c) Is she sound, fit and healthy and free from hereditary conditions which can be passed to a foal?

2. Do I have suitable facilities?

- a) Is my paddock big enough?
- b) Is my stable big enough?
- c) Is my fencing safe and secure?
- d) Do I have easy access for frequent visits, possibly overnight?
- e) Will a breeding mare and foal cause interference to others using the facilities (eg livery)?

3. Do I have time to spend handling and training a young foal?

4. Do I have the knowledge and skill to handle and train a young foal? If not do I have access to help and education?

5. Can I afford to breed and raise a foal?



CHOOSING A STALLION

**DON'T CHOOSE A STALLION JUST BECAUSE HE IS NEAR TO YOU, OR HIS STUD FEES ARE CHEAP.
CHOOSE THE BEST STALLION YOU CAN AFFORD THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOUR MARE.**

Consider:

- **the type of foal you want to breed. If you want to breed a show quality foal, you are likely to be more successful if you choose a show quality stallion.**
- **the pedigrees of your mare and possible stallion(s). If they are related it will narrow the gene pool and increase the risk of genetic diseases and mutations. To minimise these risks, try to find a stallion that has at least 4 or 5 generations of unique parentage to your mare. The Shire Horse Society can supply extended pedigrees to help you with this.**
- **the conformation & action of your mare - choose a stallion that will compliment your mare, not one that has similar faults.**
- **temperament, size, colour, markings, distance, cost etc – these are secondary considerations and should not take priority, but may be of some significance.**

LOOK AT THE LIST OF STALLIONS PUBLISHED ON THE SOCIETY WEBSITE

www.shire-horse.org.uk

The list contains stallions available for use in the current year. They have all been approved for breeding by the Society and have all been issued with a Service Book for the year. Stallions that have been awarded Premiums have this noted at the end of their listing. Stallions must have attended the National Show at least once to be awarded their Premium status.

- Choose your potential stallions from this list, then make arrangements to see them before deciding which to use.
- If it is possible, see other horses sired by your potential stallions, this can be helpful but bear in mind that their dams will also have influenced their quality.

BEWARE of using stallions that are not approved or have not been issued with a service book. Foals by such stallions will not be eligible for registration in the SHS Stud Book (except as Non-Breeding), and this will have an impact on the future use and value of the foal. If in doubt contact the Shire Horse Society **BEFORE** taking your mare to stud.

FIND OUT THE TERMS OF USING YOUR CHOSEN STALLION

Before making a final decision, find out and make sure you are happy with:

- **the stud fee for the stallion**
- **the keep fee for the mare**
- **any additional fees required, eg worming, shoeing/foot trimming, health screening, scanning and other vet fees etc and how these are to be paid**
- **if the stallion owner will undertake health testing eg swabbing or if this is required before your mare comes to the stud**
- **the length of time the stallion owner is prepared to keep your mare**
- **if the service will be “in hand” or if your mare and stallion will be running together (in hand is more dangerous for the handlers, but running together is unreliable and the service may not be witnessed, or when expected**
- **the extent of general care your mare will receive during her stay**
- **if there is any arrangement in the event your mare is not in foal eg no stud fee or free service the following year**
- **anything else you feel you need to be aware of ahead of taking your mare to stud**

PREPARING YOUR MARE FOR STUD

- **Ensure your mare is good to handle. Serving mares is dangerous for the handlers, unruly behaviour from mares makes it more so.**
- **Ensure your mare is in good condition but not over fat as this can cause infertility.**
- **Observe your mare's breeding cycle so that her behaviour is known, any problems can be identified and dealt with and she can be taken to stud at an appropriate time. Occasionally a mare may need hormone assistance to stabilise/initiate her cycles.**
- **Make sure your mare is wormed and her vaccinations for Equine Influenza and Tetanus are up to date.**
- **Ensure your mare is swabbed and free from infections that can pass between mares via the stallion.**
- **Remove shoes, particularly the hind shoes to minimise risk of injury to the stallion and handler in the event that your mare kicks out during service.**

- **Label all equipment that goes to stud with your mare eg headcollar, rugs etc keep equipment to a minimum.**
- **Make sure your mare's passport is to hand. This must accompany your mare under Horse Passport Regulations, and may be needed to confirm identity of your mare and record any medication that might be needed.**



(Photograph; Cotebrook Shire Horse Centre)

HEALTH TESTS

Not all studs ask for health tests but it is safer to do them in the interests of disease control and successful breeding. Mares should be tested for:

Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM) – bacterial infection resulting in infertility. Vaginal discharge usually present.

Test - clitoral swab taken any time during the mare's cycle.

Endometritis – bacterial infection of the uterus resulting in infertility. Often undiagnosed due to lack of visible symptoms.

Test- endometrial swab taken while the mare is in season.

Other Recommended Testing:

Equine Viral Arteritis (EVA) – viral infection affecting the respiratory system and causing abortion.

Test - blood test recommended after 1st January of the current year.

Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) – viral infection causing respiratory and neurological disease and abortion. “Abortion storms” can occur in groups of mares living together.

Test – blood test. Vaccination recommended.

More information about these and other diseases can be found in the HBLB Codes Of Practice

<https://codes.hblb.org.uk>

SCANNING

Pre-service scan

This can help identify problems in the mare and enable treatment before going to stud, to maximise the chances of healthy conception.

Post Service Scans

14-16 days after service - can confirm pregnancy and identify twins.
This is the best time to deal with twins.

21 days after service - can confirm that the embryo has implanted and is developing properly. Dealing with twins at this stage is more likely to result in loss of both embryos.



(Photographs: Universal Imaging)

The prudent stallion owner will arrange for the mare to be scanned, but the mare owner will be required to pay the vets fees for this.

Scanning will enable the mare to be served again on her next cycle if she is not in foal.

Before the mare leaves the stud, ensure that arrangements are made for all bills to be paid. Stallion owners are not obliged to issue service certificates if fees are not paid.

SERVICE CERTIFICATE

A certificate of service is required in order to register the foal. Make sure you obtain this certificate and keep it safe. If the mare is sold before the foal is born, ensure that the service certificate is given to the new owner. This also applies to services by Artificial Insemination.



CONGRATULATIONS!

