

Drum Beat

Member Spotlight, continued



Boon with the staff of the University of Florida Large Animal Clinic, doing what he does best, just being stunning!

Boon was very sick as a yearling, not many people are aware. After two surgeries and almost losing Boon a few times, it was eventually found he accidentally ate a piece of metal, which caused an abscess in his body and infected his stomach, heart, and lungs. In cows, it is called hardware's disease and is very rare and very deadly in horses. After years of treatment spanning from 2008 to 2009, Boon has

emerged into the great horse he is today. Not only is he alive and healthy, he competes, shows, breeds, and is the 2012 Celebration Breyer Horse. Boon received his life saving treatment from the University of Florida; which leads us back to his illness. Laura Moon and Boon are giving back to the hospital that saved him; They helped set up and are raising funds to help other equines in

need of hospital care at the University of Florida. It is affectionately called "The Boon Fund". If you are interested in donating, your chance is coming later this year. Laura will be raffling off one of Boon's Breyer Models in August. Money raised will go directly to The Boon Fund. For more information, contact Laura Moon, Moonlitacre@aol.com or visit her website at www.moonlitacre.com

Predicting Impending Parturition

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There are of course many signs of the approach of birth in the mare: "Softening" of the tail head and vulva lips; an increase in the size of the udder; an overall change in the mare's body shape; sometimes a change in disposition; and "waxing" - the build up of wax-like droplets on the end of the mare's teats. This last signal is probably one of the most misguidedly used! Often I hear it said "my mare waxed up last night, she's probably going to foal tonight or tomorrow", and with that the mare owner goes out to the barn to check the mare yet again, and may be plagued by many restless nights yet! The sad truth about "waxing" is that it may happen as long as a month before the mare foals, although up to two weeks is more common. Either way, it's not a very reliable sign! The best indicator I have found yet consists of the inspection of a few drops of the mare's milk once a day. I always attempt to carry out this process at about the same time each evening - usually feed time. Milk out a drop or two from

the mare onto a black plastic surface (you really do only need a drop or two!). A watch strap was suggested to me originally, but I have found that the black plastic top of a 35 mm photographic film container works even better. Well prior to parturition, the exudate will appear slightly white or yellowy, and one is easily able to see the black plastic below through the liquid. Within the 24 hours prior to the mare giving birth, the liquid will become almost opaque, and it will be very hard to see the black plastic. You may well also notice what appear to be large white granules in the liquid. It will probably take at least one foaling to be able to identify the difference, but once you've seen it, there's no mistaking it! From a medical point of view - the difference in the consistency is as a result of a change in the electrolyte levels in the liquid. Close to term, calcium and potassium levels increase, and sodium levels drop. Incidentally if induction of parturition is contemplated, recognition of

this electrolyte change is an important part of determining if it is safe to induce the mare. I would not recommend that induction be carried out without such a check, and the finding of acceptable levels, as well as a number of other checks that must be made, also with acceptable results. **Note:** *There are no such things as absolutes in horse breeding! It is therefore imperative to recognize that although the above technique is a useful indicator, it will not be present in all pre-foaling mares. It is also worthy of note that with some mares the changes will occur within 24 hours of foaling - in other words, if you see a change in the milk as noted, the mare is going to foal within the subsequent 24 hours, but that may mean she foals as little as a few hours after the change is noted! And then there are always exceptions, where no change is seen, or rare instances where the change may precede foaling by as much as 2 or 3 days... It is not an absolute, it's only a guide!*

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