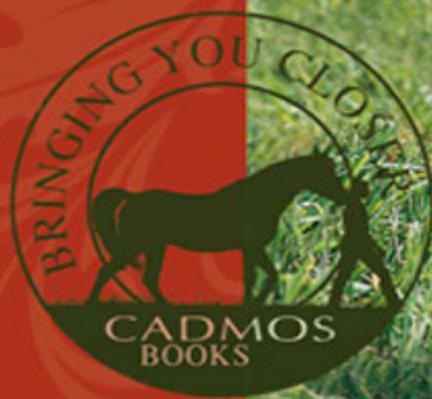


Karin Kattwinkel

Your First Foal

Horse breeding
for beginners



CADMOS

Your First Foal

Horse breeding for beginners

Karin Kattwinkel



Photo: N. Sachs

Your First Foal

Horse breeding for beginners

Karin Kattwinkel

Copyright © 2011 Cadmos Publishing Limited, Richmond,
UK

Copyright of original edition © 2005 Cadmos Verlag GmbH,
Schwarzenbek, Germany

Design print edition: Ravenstein + Partner, Verden

Setting print edition: Anke Werner

Cover photograph: Christiane Slawik

Illustrations: Maria Mähler

Translation: Ute Weyer

E-Book: Satzweiss.com [Print Web Software GmbH](http://PrintWebSoftware.com)

All rights reserved: No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-0-85788-003-1

eISBN: 978-0-85788-624-8

Inhalt

FOREWORD

FIRST CONSIDERATIONS

Stable and environmental requirements

What will your foal cost you?

Selling your foal

Assessing your mare as a breeding prospect

Only the best is good enough

How to find the right stallion for your mare

SOME EARLY DECISIONS

What do you want your foal to be?

Breed societies and stud books

The international hot blood breeds

Native pony breeds

Other pony stud books

Warmblood and sport horse breeds

Heavy horse breeds

Colour-specific breeds

Other horse breeds

Checking your foal is eligible for registration

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO EQUINE GENETICS

Genes

Size

'Birds and the bees' for horse owners

Male reproductive organs

Female reproductive organs

The mare's cycle

Detecting when the mare is in season

Record keeping

Veterinary examinations

Swabs

Vaccinations

Other things to remember

Feeding the mare before mating

COVERING THE MARE

Mating in a herd

Teasing

Identifying the right moment for covering

Artificial insemination or natural mating?

Supervised covering

Artificial insemination

Only for professionals – embryo transfer

What costs are involved?

Dealing with mating injuries

A NEW LIFE DEVELOPS

Fertilisation

Has the mating been successful?

Development of the foal

Providing for the foetus

Pregnancy testing

Fertility problems in the mare

The mare is too fat!

Misalignment of the vulva

Abnormal cycle

Oestrus without ovulation

Late ovulation

Ovulation in the middle of the cycle

Prolonged intervals between cycles

Silent seasons

Aggressive behaviour during season

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS DURING PREGNANCY

Causes of non-contagious abortion

Bacterial infection of the uterus

Fever

Malnutrition

Accidents or exhaustion

How to deal with viral abortion

Twins

CARING FOR THE HIGHLY PREGNANT MARE

Exercise in every weather

Keeping the mare fit

FOALING

Final preparations

Worming

The importance of peace and quiet

Signs of impending birth

The normal birth

Inducing birth

THE NEW BORN FOAL

Caring for the very young foal

Imprinting by the mare

Human imprinting

Changing behaviour in the mare

WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG

The amniotic sack doesn't break

The birth process ceases

Breach presentation

One leg is trapped

The foal is too big for the mare

Torn uterus

Retention of the afterbirth

Damaged vertebrae or pelvis in the mare

Aggressive behaviour of the mare

WHEN THE FIRST EXCITEMENT IS OVER

Checking that the foal is healthy

Colostrum: the natural vaccine

The importance of hygiene

Eating droppings in the first few days

When to feed extra milk

Allergic reaction to colostrum

Mastitis

Death of the mare

Covering the mare again

DISEASES OF THE FOAL

Meconium retention

Joint-ill

Diarrhoea

Non-contagious intestinal infection in newborn foals

Contagious intestinal infection

Physiological (normal) diarrhoea on day 9

Infectious arthritis

Navel infection

Hernia

Ruptured bladder

Upper airway infection

Pneumonia

Strangles

CORRECT FEEDING OF MARE AND FOAL

Feeding during pregnancy and lactation

The danger of over feeding

Increased nutritional needs in the final stage of pregnancy

Feeding following foaling

REGISTERING AND SHOWING YOUR FOAL

More on breed society registration

Equine passports

Preparations for a show

Looking right

Correct loading of mare and foal

HANDLING THE GROWING FOAL

The importance of companionship

The foal's first teeth

Worming

Vaccinations

Providing the essentials

Turn out

What every foal must learn

Foot care

Conformational problems

Hereditary contracted tendons

Club foot

Acquired contracted tendons in the yearling

Unequal leg length

Additional feeding

Extra portions

Non-traumatic weaning

Horses as herd animals

SOME FINAL REMINDERS

Freedom of turn out

Important facts about pastures

The factors that influence growth

The arrival of sexual maturity

Growth rates

How to recognise the foal's future potential

USEFULL ADDRESSES



Photo: N. Sachs

FOREWORD

Seeing your own foal develop from an embryo into a promising youngster is one of the most rewarding experiences a horse lover can encounter. In this book, I aim to explain what you need to know in order for you to enjoy your foal to the full. Even if some of the subjects I cover might seem a little off-putting, my intention is always to give you the information you need that will not only help you to make an informed decision but also help you to recognise potential problem areas and hopefully prevent them before they arise. This approach will benefit both your beloved mare and the foal you plan to have from her and your own enjoyment of them.

But first you need to be really honest with yourself and ask: 'Is my favourite mare actually suitable to be bred from?' Only if you are absolutely sure that the answer is 'yes' should you proceed any further with your breeding plans.

Far too often, worn out or unrideable mares are used for breeding, based on the argument 'if I cannot ride her any more she should at least have a foal'. As many problems are hereditary, this is not an ideal way to select breeding stock, because progeny of such parents often have the same problems as their sires and dams. This is why the idea that breeding a foal from your own mare means that you can get a new horse or pony cheaply is often a false one. Breeding from a mare and raising its foal, delightful activities as they are, requires a lot of care, patience and knowledge as well as money and time. Being able to cope with problems – because set-backs and disappointments are part of every breeder's life – and the support of your family or your partner are therefore essential.

You should also remember that mistakes made in the foal's first few months will influence its whole life. It will be a good four years before the foal can be ridden, and in no other species is managing the growing phase as important as it is in the horse. This is because the early days determine the development of the skeleton and constitution and therefore its suitability for performance or pleasure. Incorrect management as a foal can finish a promising career prematurely. The temperament of the youngster may also suffer if it is not raised in a horse-specific environment including sufficient space in the stable and field and equine companions of the same age. Keeping a mare and foal on their own behind the house has nothing to do with animal welfare; it is pure egoism.

Affection, reason and careful attention to detail are other important requirements for a breeder. You should be a guide for your young animal. Only then can you shape its

character and ensure that it is well-mannered and has a good temperament. Far too often, however, people do not treat their horses consistently. In successful human-equine relations, the human being has to be the leader from the start and needs to be shown respect at all times without compromise. The equine should always be an inferior herd member, a role that suits a herd animal well as it provides security and protection.

Last but not least, you should be able to recognise your own limits and ask for competent help and advice when necessary.

Enjoy this book and I hope that it helps you breed a foal that is all you wanted.

Karin Kattwinkel



An open-sided barn or field shelter with access to grass and other mares and foals for company is a good environment for mares and foals as it can be adjusted to their changing needs. Photo: Chr. Slawik

FIRST CONSIDERATIONS

Stable and environmental requirements

Conventional stable yards, particularly those designed for riding horses are not really suitable for brood mares and foals. This is because, in the last third of pregnancy, the mare needs a quieter environment and an undisturbed retreat. She should also not be exposed to new horses on a regular basis as there is a risk of infection from them. For the actual birth, she needs a clean separate area with plenty of straw somewhere where the foaling can easily be

observed. Even native breeds may require assistance and a muddy shared paddock is not suitable.

Foaling outside is ideal for hygienic reasons but it is difficult to observe. Mares, particularly maidens with a first foal, fiercely protect their newborn from other horses and people. A spacious stable gives them the necessary peace and quiet during this important bonding phase. However, locking up a mare used to living in a herd in a stable without visual contact with other horses is not a good idea. It causes far too much stress!

If you cannot offer your mare a suitable area for foaling and for the first few weeks after the birth, it is better to take her to an experienced breeder to foal down. Your foal will then also have playmates to grow up with. Understandably, every owner would like to see their 'once in a lifetime' foal being born and grow up and have it all to themselves. The welfare of mother and foal, however, should always be more important than the fulfilment of your own dreams. If you really do not wish to send the mare away for foaling a possible compromise is to alter your stable layout to suit her needs. Perhaps you could do it together with another local single-mare-owning breeder? Whatever arrangement you choose, the most important requirement is a large, high-quality pasture. A young foal should be turned out during summer, day and night! For this reason alone, most riding stables are not ideal for breeding.

Advice

Make sure there are no hazards in the vicinity of the mare and foal. No protruding nails, sharp edges, small gaps (under doors and partitions as well), no hayracks in which the small feet of a foal could get trapped.

The most important questions for new breeders are:

- **What do you want your foal to become?**

Do you want an eventer, show jumper, dressage star, hunter, show pony, endurance horse or an all-round pleasure horse for the family? Set a specific goal and choose the sire and dam accordingly.

- **Are you going to keep your foal or sell it?**

Do you want to ride your youngster yourself? Can you break it in yourself? Do you want to sell it as a weanling, a just-backed youngster or as an educated adult horse?

- **Do you have sufficient space to raise a foal and possibly keep it for 4 years or even the rest of its life?**

Is the stable and pasture suitable for a brood mare and her youngster?

- **Have you got enough time to look after them properly?**

A mare and foal need as much time as a riding horse, possibly even more!

- **Is your knowledge of how to handle and raise a foal sufficient to deal with all situations?**

- **Do you know enough about breeding?**

Or are you at least prepared to learn everything you need?

- **Are you persistent enough?**

Horse breeding requires persistence. Success takes time, setbacks are common. It takes years before your dream of an adult horse becomes true.

- **Do you have enough money?**

Attempting to breed your own foal can be very expensive. It is not a way to get a cheap replacement for your mare. Keep savings for additional vet's bills and extras.

- **What does your family say about it?**

Not an unimportant question, especially if they are not as enthusiastic as you are.



Photo: N. Sachs

What will your foal cost you?

Because the ever-rising costs of everything from hay to vaccinations vary from area to area, and because the needs of a native pony broodmare and her foal are somewhat different to those of a thin-coated Thoroughbred or a finely-tuned Warmblood, it is impossible to give an exact figure in

answer to this question. However, you must know your own accurate costings before you make the decision about whether or not to breed from your mare, so use the checklist below to help you compile the relevant costs.

Up until the time of weaning, you have to expect the following costs:

Insurance for mare and foal Feed

- Hard feed, 1 ton
- Hay, 1 ton
- Straw, 2 tons
- Food supplements, 50 kg

Pasture (fencing, fertiliser)

Covering (stud fee)

Transport

Electricity, water

Farrier for mare and foal

Breeding society membership and registration fees

Veterinary costs

- Swab
- Follicle check and ultrasound
- Pregnancy test
- Vaccinations
- Examination of the newborn foal
- Worming mare and foal
- Contingency fund for veterinary costs

Contingency fund for other additional costs

Professional breeders also have to consider:

Value of the mare

10 years of use

Rates

Staff salaries and National Insurance contributions